

THE INFLUENCE OF BULWER-LYTTON ON
CHARLES DICKENS'S OLIVER TWIST

by

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INTRODUCTION

It is often difficult to demonstrate the influences of one author upon another. Any evidence that might exist may appear to be sketchy and exaggerated when viewed. Charles Dickens, however, seems to be a happy exception to this. Especially when a young author, he was quick to seize upon any idea that seemed in his opinion to be meritorious and would then absorb it as an integral part of his own work.

Dickens was an avid reader and, particularly in his younger days, was impressed by both books and their authors. Therefore, it must have been a noteworthy thrill for this young author to become acquainted with Edward Bulwer-Lytton, author of the then popular criminal romances, Paul Clifford and Eugene Aram. Shortly after Dickens became acquainted with Mr. Lytton, the younger author began writing his first novel with a long sustained plot, Oliver Twist. It is the purpose of this study to demonstrate that Dickens, being impressed by Lytton and his works, particularly Paul Clifford, was influenced by them in his writing of Oliver Twist.

Because Dickens's own background sheds considerable light upon the plot and outcome of Oliver Twist, this will be discussed in the first chapter. Following Dickens's background, there will be presented a discussion concerned with the composition and purposes of Oliver Twist. However, the main discussion of this study will be concentrated upon a comparison of Oliver Twist with Lytton's Paul Clifford, a comparison that will provide ample internal evidence of Lytton's influence on Dickens.

DICKENS'S BACKGROUND

Charles John Huffham Dickens was born at Landport, Portsea, England, on February 7, 1812. His father, John Dickens, a clerk in the Navy Pay Office at Portsmouth Dockyard, was a loquacious, genial man who enjoyed warm-hearted fellowship over a bottle of wine. His manner and appearance belied the fact that he was the son of a house steward and a serving maid. In 1809 John Dickens had married Elizabeth Barrow, daughter of Charles Barrow, chief conductor of Moneys in Town for the city of London. She was well educated and attractive. Charles was the second of their eight children, two of whom died in infancy.

When Charles was two years old the family moved to London, this being one of a series of many moves for the family, necessitated by continually straitened financial conditions as well as post reassignments. John Dickens was incurably careless in financial matters and the family was gradually plunged into ever-increasingly deep debt. Because of the many moves and the straitened finances, young Charles's education was rather spotty, leaving much to be desired on his part. His mother awakened in him an early interest in reading by teaching him the rudiments of both English and Latin. This was followed by his attendance, with his elder sister, Fanny, at a preparatory day-school in Chatham, where the family happened to be living at that time. During his last two years of residence at Chatham, young Charles was sent to a school kept by William Giles, a young Baptist minister. Mr. Giles, recognizing Charles as a child of unusual ability, gave the youngster special attention, under which Charles made rapid progress scholastically. However, when Charles was ten years old, his father was transferred back to London once more, and this ended the child's formal academic training.

By the time Charles was approaching his twelfth birthday, the family financial situation had reached a hopeless state, and the Dickenss were forced to sell or pawn much of their household goods. Charles, being often employed in these transactions, learned about a different facet of life, a lower level with which he soon was to become even more familiar, when only two days after his twelfth birthday he started to work at Warren's Blacking Factory. His father and mother were pleased with his employment, because by this time their financial plight was desperate. Charles was not pleased, however. Concerning this he later stated:

It is wonderful to me how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age. It is wonderful to me that even after my descent into the poor little drudge I had been since we came to London, no one had compassion enough on me--a child of singular abilities: quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally--to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school. Our friends, I take it, were tired out. No one made any sign. My father and mother were quite satisfied. They could hardly have been more so, if I had been twenty years of age, distinguished at a grammar-school, and going to Cambridge.¹

When, only eleven days after Charles began his detested job, John Dickens was arrested for a debt of 40 pounds, the Dickens family was sent to Marshalsea prison. Only Charles and Fanny, who had received a scholarship at the Academy of Music, remained on the outside. Charles, living in shabby lodgings, felt very much alone and neglected. Concerning this bleak period he later said:

I know I do not exaggerate, unconsciously and unintentionally, the scantiness of my resources and the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling or so were given me by anyone, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked, from morning to night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I

¹ John Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens, Volume 1, p. 21.

tried, but ineffectually, not to anticipate my money, and to make it last the week through by putting it away in a drawer I had in the counting house, wrapped into six little parcels, each parcel containing the same amount, and labelled with a different day. I know that I lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.²

The family remained in Marshalsea for just slightly over three months, but through his visits to the prison during this time, Charles learned much about his family's fellow debtors. He had developed an early interest in people and this group was much different than his previous acquaintances had been. Concerning his interest in the occupants of Marshalsea he said:

When I went to Marshalsea of a night, I was always delighted to hear from my mother what she knew about the histories of the different debtors in the prison; and. . .I. . .was. . .anxious to see them come in, one after another (though I knew the greater part of them already, to speak to, and they me). . .I made out my own little character and story for every man. . .I might be able to do that now, more truly; not more earnestly, or with a closer interest. Their different peculiarities of dress, of face, of gait, of manner, were written indelibly upon my memory. I would rather have seen it than the best play ever played; and I thought about it afterwards, over the pots of paste-blackening, often and often.³

When the family was released from Marshalsea, Charles had hoped to be released from his employment, but this did not immediately occur. Finally, after his father quarreled with Charles's employer, he was allowed to leave the blacking workshop and to attend school once more. He probably had spent only four or five months in the blacking warehouse, but this time of despair seemed much longer to the child and undoubtedly influenced his life greatly. He never spoke of this period until long after he had become a famous author, and even his

²Ibid., p. 25.

³Ibid., pp. 30-31.

wife knew nothing concerning it until after they had been married for many years. But the experiences of Dickens as a child illuminated the pages of his novels, and contributed particularly to the atmosphere and purpose of Oliver Twist.

Charles's education was now furthered formally during the next two and one-half years by his attendance at the Wellington House Academy. Here his interest in writing developed. He particularly enjoyed creating small tales, and a club was founded among the boys at Wellington House for the purpose of circulating these tales that he wrote. He also was greatly interested in private theatricals put on by the boys of the school.

Early in 1827 it again became necessary for Charles Dickens to leave school and seek employment. He entered the solicitor's office of Ellis and Blackmore during May of that year as a clerk and remained in this position until November of 1828. Charles found this work rather dull and his mind turned more and more toward journalism. A knowledge of shorthand was necessary to a career in journalism and, consequently, he began to study shorthand. It was upon attaining proficiency in this that he dared to leave the solicitors' office and became a shorthand writer at Doctors' Commons, a building housing the Admiralty Court, the Prerogative Court, the Consistory Court, etc. Dickens worked in the Consistory Court, which was the diocesan court of the Bishop of London. This job became wearisome to him and he hoped to do Parliamentary reporting. This ambition was realized in 1832, when, at the age of twenty, he was hired as a member of the reporting staff of the evening newspaper, the True Sun. Thus he began covering debates in the House of Commons. Here he soon became noted for his accuracy in reporting.

During his time spent at Doctors' Commons and now at Parliament, Dickens's political beliefs were developing.

The young reporter's mind had traveled a long way since he had trembled in childhood at the radicals as terrible banditti who deserved to be hanged. Now he was an ardent reformer. And he reached the Gallery just in time to witness the final stages of the struggle over the Reform Bill of 1832.⁴

The Reform Bill of 1832 provided for the redistribution of the Parliamentary seats and virtually tripled the electorate. It disfranchised fifty-six burroughs which had no, or a very small population, the so-called "rotten" burroughs, or those in which the designation of the Parliamentary representatives had been controlled by "patrons," usually aristocratic landowners who owned the bulk of the property in the burrough. The Parliamentary representation of other burroughs was decreased, while that of large towns and of the counties was also increased. The representation of Ireland and Scotland was also increased. The electorate was broadened by the elimination of various restrictive residential and financial qualifications. On the whole the provisions of this bill benefited the middle class, which was increasing in numbers and influence in consequence of the Industrial Revolution and was dominant in the House of Commons; it adversely affected the landowning aristocrats who controlled the House of Lords. Parliamentary consideration of the bill had been attended by a sharp struggle between the two houses of Parliament and by violence upon the part of the general populace, the latter voicing discontent with the opposition of the House of Lords.

⁴ Edgar Johnson, Charles Dickens His Tragedy and Triumph, p. 62.

Two bills, embodying the reforms of the act of 1832 and frequently called the First and Second Reform Bills, had been introduced in Parliament in 1831. The first failed to pass in the House of Commons and led to a new election in which proponents of electoral reform won a large majority. The rejection of the second bill by the House of Lords, also in 1831, provoked widespread public agitation and riots. Opposition by the House of Lords to the third reform bill, that of 1832, almost precipitated civil war, which was averted when a sufficient number of peers were persuaded to abstain from voting in the House of Lords in order to assure passage of the measure. Thus enactment of the Reform Bill of 1832 resulted not only in the transfer of political power from the land-owning aristocrats to the middle class, but also in the subordination of the House of Lords to the popular will.

The reformed Parliament was a hardworking group of men far superior in ability to the usual mediocrity of such legislative bodies. It achieved a remarkable legislative record, recasting municipal institutions, passing the first effective Factory Act, and abolishing Negro slavery. It contained such outstanding veterans of debate as Lord Grey, Lord John Russell, and Edward Stanley, later fourteenth Earl of Derby, as well as the Irish leader O'Connell; among the brilliant more recent arrivals were Cobbett, Gladstone, Macaulay, Grote, and the successful novelist Edward Lytton Bulwer.⁵

Lytton began his political career in the House of Commons by supporting the Reform Bill of 1832. All of Dickens's novels show the influence of his early enthusiasm for reforms which first came to his attention in this formative period of his life.

In 1833 Dickens became a regular Parliamentary reporter for the Morning Chronicle. For this newspaper he was called on to report the

⁵Ibid., p. 63.

debates on the Poor Law Bill. This bill, passed in 1834, placed the administration of public relief on a uniform, organized basis. One of the chief provisions of this law stipulated that relief for the able-bodied unemployed and their dependents should be furnished only in work-houses, and that the nature and amount of the relief should not be such as to elevate the economic status of the recipients above that of the poorest laborers. This law had not been passed without violent resistance, and Dickens stood on the side of those opposed to it. For Dickens the reporting of the debates "was a racking but deeply interesting spell of duty, a duty by execution of which he may be said to have qualified himself forcefully to attack the conditions created by the new legislation."⁶ This objection to the Poor Law eventually provided a major purpose for Oliver Twist.

During this time Dickens was not limiting his efforts to newspaper reporting only. He had begun to write small fictional sketches based on the various types of London life he was constantly observing and people with whom he had come in contact. In 1833, his first piece of original writing got into print. This was a sketch entitled "A Dinner at Poplar Walk."

He sent it, as an unknown contributor, to a magazine called the Old Monthly, and its acceptance gave him the keenest joy he had ever known. Already for more than two years he had worked as a press reporter in the gallery of the House of Commons and elsewhere, but this mere livelihood was far from satisfying his ambition; he had often thought of the stage, and even gone through a good deal of hard, methodical work with a view of training himself for that career. The publication of his story--which so delighted him that as he tells us, he walked for half an hour about Westminster Hall, his eyes 'so dimmed with joy and pride that they

⁶Una Birch Pope-Hennessy, Charles Dickens, p. 29.

could not bear the street, and were not fit to be seen there'-- fixed his mind in the right direction. Though the Old Monthly paid him nothing, he contributed nine more sketches, anonymous save the last two, which were signed 'Boz'--a jocose abridgement of 'Moses'. ...Such matter was too attractive to remain long without market value; an evening edition of the Morning Chronicle. . . continued publication of his sketches. ...⁷

It soon became known in the Gallery that the "Boz" of the Sketches was really Charles Dickens, and presently authors began to take notice of him. Harrison Ainsworth, the novelist who had only recently become famous for his novel Rookwood, had read Dickens's articles as they came out, and was the first professional writer to invite him to his house as a fellow author. Dickens and Ainsworth became close friends for a time, and as Ainsworth did much entertaining in his home, Dickens was to meet a number of important and influential personages through him. Also, Ainsworth suggested and aided in the publication of the sketches in book form. He introduced Dickens to Macrone, his own publisher, and thus the sketches were published in 1836. Also, on Christmas day of that year, Harrison Ainsworth initiated the longest and most intimate friendship in Dickens's life when he introduced him to John Forster, the literary and dramatic critic of the Examiner. For the next few years the three were inseparable.

It was probably through Forster that Dickens met Bulwer-Lytton socially. Although Dickens and Lytton did not become intimate for a number of years, they were on a friendly basis by 1837 and occasionally dined with one another. Lytton was both politician and writer. As a writer he attempted verse, drama, political pamphlets and criticism, but put his best energies into novel writing. His first literary

⁷George Gissing, Critical Studies of the Works of Charles Dickens, pp. 14-15.

success had come with Pelham in 1828, followed by Paul Clifford (1830), Eugene Aram (1832), The Last Days of Pompeii (1834), and Rienzi (1835).

Bulwer's rapid literary success, with Paul Clifford, Eugene Aram, The Last Days of Pompeii and Rienzi, his luxurious scale of living, and perhaps his consciousness of his distinguished social position, evoked among many of his fellow writers a good deal of spiteful resentment. 'A thoroughly satin character,' one of them remarked, 'but then it is the richest satin.' Bulwer, however, was magnanimously quick to recognize the merits of others. Although the rising star of Dickens threatened to eclipse his own, he gave to Pickwick, from its earliest numbers, the warmest praise, even 'before the depth beneath its humor was acknowledged,' as he wrote to Forster, 'yea, tho' I foresaw that he of all men was the one that my jealousy might best be aroused by.' And Dickens paid public tribute in later years to the generosity with which Bulwer stood far above all the 'little grudging jealousies' that sometimes disparage the brightness of literature.⁸

Thus, by 1837, when he was 25 years of age, Dickens was well on the road to fame and friendships. The main reason was, of course, the extraordinary success of his first novel. On March 31, 1836, after having already published, in two volumes, a collection of Sketches, Illustrative of Everyday Life and Everyday People, he had issued the first monthly number of The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, edited by Boz, a classic which was to run through twenty installments. The book became increasingly successful, necessitating the printing of over forty thousand copies of the fifteenth installment. Consequently, Dickens gave up his job of Parliamentary reporter and devoted himself to a literary career. The book which followed Pickwick Papers was Oliver Twist, and in these first novels can be observed the typical creative habits of a great novelist at the beginning of a distinguished career.

⁸ Johnson, op. cit., p. 210.

OLIVER TWIST - A NOVEL WITH A PURPOSE

In November of 1836 Charles Dickens signed a contract to become editor of a new magazine, Bentley's Miscellany, resigning from his position with the Morning Chronicle in order to do so.

The first issue of the new venture came out on January 2, 1837, and was a success. To the first number Charles contributed what became the first of The Mudfrog Papers, a skit on the Royal Association meeting at Mudfrog (Chatham). It told of Tulrumbles's attempts to stage a Lord Mayor's Show at Mudfrog and to reform the town's morals. The satire is feeble, but shows Charles no friend of Victorian moral reformers.

In the February issue appeared the first installment of Oliver Twist, which he meant at first to link with the Mudfrog-Chatham series.⁹

Oliver Twist was to run serially until March of 1839, and was Dickens's first long continuous story with a sustained plot.

Oliver Twist was a bold departure from the genial tone of Pickwick Papers. Instead of safely echoing the humor and hilarity that had set all England roaring with affectionate laughter, Dickens embarked on a scathing denunciation of the new Poor Law and moved on to a lurid and somber portrayal of London's criminal slums.¹⁰

Although he had not as yet finished Pickwick at the time he embarked upon Oliver Twist, Dickens was able to throw himself completely into his newer work and showed a certain excitement over it. A. W. Ward believed this to be due to the fact that Dickens was writing this novel with a purpose in mind. Concerning Dickens at this point Ward wrote:

Those who have looked at the MS. of this famous novel will remember the vigour of the handwriting, and how few, in comparison with his later MSS, are the additions and obliterations which it exhibits. But here and there the writing shows traces of excitement; for the author's heart was in his work, and much of it, contrary to his later habit, was written at night. No doubt he

⁹Jack Lindsay, Charles Dickens, A Biographical and Critical Study, p. 128.

¹⁰Johnson, op. cit., p. 189.

was upheld in the labour of authorship by something besides ambition and consciousness of strength. Oliver Twist was certainly written with a purpose, and with one that was afterwards avowed.¹¹

George Gissing, too, felt that Dickens had a purpose in writing

Oliver Twist. However, he was more explicit as to the exact nature of this purpose when he wrote:

Oliver Twist had a twofold moral purpose: to exhibit the evil working of the Poor Law Act, and to give a faithful picture of the life of thieves in London. The motives hung well together, for in Dickens's view the pauper system was directly responsible for a great deal of crime. It must be remembered that, by the new Act of 1834, outdoor sustenance was as much as possible done away with, paupers being henceforth relieved only on condition of their entering a workhouse, while the workhouse life was made thoroughly uninviting, among other things by the separation of husbands and wives, and parents and children. Against this seemingly harsh treatment of a helpless class Dickens is very bitter; he regards such legislation as the outcome of cold-blooded theory, evolved by well-to-do persons of the privileged caste, who neither perceive nor care about the result of their system in individual suffering.¹²

Thus, although the Poor Law of 1834 did effectively diminish the pauperism in England, Dickens could see the evils that it enforced. Theoretically the law was to distinguish between the helpless and the individual who could work but wouldn't. However, in practice it caused the vagrant, the drunkard, and the prostitute to live in the workhouse alongside the aged, the ill, and the foundling children. It was with the foundling children that Dickens was particularly sympathetic, for he felt that they suffered the most under this system. These children received little or no education, associated with the dregs of humanity, and were apprenticed to a trade as soon as possible in order that they need no longer be supported. Such individuals had little chance in

¹¹ A. W. Ward, Dickens, p. 30.

¹² Gissing, Critical Studies of Dickens, pp. 45-46.

life; even if fortunate enough to escape the lure of crime or an early death due to privation, they still were branded with the social stigma of having been workhouse children.

Dickens's own period of childhood hardship had undoubtedly served to sharpen his sympathy for the helpless child. Concerning this Jack Lindsay wrote:

He had, in fact, written in Oliver a novel which emotionally pleaded the case of the tortured and driven children, but he had done so intuitively. It would have seemed to him an accident that it coincided with Ashley's campaign for the factory children. There was no accident there, however, and in Oliver Dickens had chosen the application of the theme which he could make effective.¹³

In Oliver Charles had based himself on certain eighteenth-century elements, both in themselves and in their offshoots in contemporary thriller and melodrama; and had used the daydream of his own childhood-at-bay to give a picture, emotionally true, of the exploited children of his own day.¹⁴

Thus, through his own unhappy experiences, Dickens developed an understanding and deep sympathy with unfortunate childhood that enabled him to write effectively concerning the situation of such a child as Oliver. Dickens was attempting to portray sympathetically the child and, consequently, to work upon the emotions of his readers, rather than to attempt to sermonize didactically. Only one who felt as deeply as the author himself did could be successful in such an attempt, and successful Dickens was. Una Birch Pope-Hennessy aptly analyzed his success in this when she wrote:

De Quincey draws a distinction between the literature of Knowledge and the literature of Power. The function of the first is to teach; the function of the second is to move. The first appeals to the intellect and the second to the heart and the emotions, and from this point of view it is not the understanding,

¹³Jack Lindsay, op. cit., p. 174.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 177.

but the understanding heart that matters. It is not so much the subject itself that affects us as the treatment of it, the charging of it with humanly generated electricity. No better illustration of this contention can be brought forward than that of Mrs. Trollope's novel on the factory child, Michael Armstrong. Informative, didactic, derived from official reports and intended to influence opinion, it neither interested nor moved anyone, whereas the story of the Parish boy, Oliver Twist, not only moved every reader, but left on their minds an indelible impression. As Dickens's friend Gilbert A. Beckett said, 'There is something feminine about Dickens that leads him to the core of the heart of the situation in hand.'

If it were not for the literature of Power, justice, for example, might remain an ideal whereas in a book it may germinate into vitalising activity. The commonest novel, by moving in alliance with human fears and hopes, with human instincts of right and wrong, sustains and quickens these affections, and working by deep agencies rescues them from torpor. Dim in origin, these emotions welled up like hidden springs in Dickens and influenced his whole being as may the forgotten incidents of childhood.¹⁵

As quoted previously, Gissing stated that the second half of Dickens's two-fold purpose in writing Oliver Twist was to portray realistically the true picture of the life of thieves in London. Forster, who was acquainted with Dickens during the period when the latter was writing the novel, also feels that this was an important part of Dickens's goal therein. Because Forster was in constant communication with Dickens and often discussed the novel with him during its time of composition, one can put credence in what Forster had to say concerning any motives Dickens had in mind when writing. Forster discussed the book and its author as follows:

Oliver Twist is the history of a child born in a workhouse and brought up by parish overseers, and there is nothing introduced that is out of keeping with the design. It is a series of pictures from the tragicomedy of lower life, worked out by perfectly natural agencies, from the dying mother and the starved wretches of the first volume, through the scenes and gradations of crime, careless or deliberate, which have a frightful consummation in the last volume, but are never without the reliefs and self-assertions

¹⁵Pope-Hennessy, op. cit., p. 42.

of humanity even in scenes and among characters so debased. It is indeed the primary purpose of the tale to show its little hero, jostled as he is in the miserable crowd, preserved every where from the vice of its pollution by an exquisite delicacy of natural sentiment which clings to him under every disadvantage. There is not a more masterly touch in fiction (and it is by such that this delightful fancy is consistently worked out to the last) than Oliver's agony of childish grief on being brought away from the branch workhouse, the wretched home associated only with suffering and starvation, and with no kind word or look, but containing still his little companions of misery.¹⁶

In particular reference to Dickens's aim to portray crime in all its real and sordid aspects Forster states further:

. . .it is the book's pre-eminent merit that vice is nowhere made attractive in it. Crime is not more intensely odious, all through, than it is also most unhappy. Not merely when its exposure comes, when guilt's latent recesses are laid bare, and the agonies of remorse are witnessed; not in the great scenes only, but in lighter and apparently careless passages; this is emphatically so. Terror and retribution dog closely at the heels both of the comedy and the tragedy of crime. They are as plainly visible when Fagin is first shown in his den, boiling the coffee in the saucepan and stopping every now and then to listen when there is the least noise below,--the villainous confidence of habit never extinguishing in him the anxious watchings and listenings of crime,--as when we see him at last in the condemned cell, like a poisoned human rat in a hole.¹⁷

Although Oliver Twist was to run serially until March of 1839, it was published as a book in three volumes in November of 1838. Opinions of the reading public concerning this book were strongly divided. Although Oliver was an immediate success with the middle classes, the outcry against the book was loud by those who objected to it on moral grounds. It also received much strong criticism from those individuals who advocated the Poor Law of 1834. Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd, the English author and lawyer, was high in his praise of Oliver Twist. He composed the following poem in honor of Dickens and his book:

¹⁶Forster, op. cit., p. 90.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 91.

To Charles Dickens, on his "Oliver Twist"

Not only with the author's happiest praise
 Thy work should be rewarded;--it is kin
 To theirs who, steeling finest nerves to win
 Great blessings for mankind, explor'd the maze
 Oppressions ages harden'd; trod the ways
 Where fruitful sorrow tracks and quickens sin,
 To draw forth strains of music from the den
 Of passions; in the culprit soul to raise
 Sweet thoughts of goodness; bid the fetters fall
 And hail the slave immortal;--for within
 Wan childhood's squalid haunts, where frightful needs
 Make tyranny more bitter, at thy call
 An angel face with patient sadness pleads
 Undying kindred to the heart of all.¹⁸

However, many other critics were not so kind. One of the loudest in his censure of Oliver Twist and other books of its type was William Makepeace Thackeray. At this time Thackeray had not as yet become a well known author. His story, Catherine, which was published in Fraser's Magazine, 1839-40, under the signature of "Ikey Solomons jun," was a stinging satire upon the currently popular "Newgate novel," in which he included Oliver Twist.

Bulwer had established the 'School of Criminal Romance,' as he did so many others, in two early tales, Paul Clifford of 1830 and Eugene Aram of 1832, to which he added Ernest Maltravers in 1837. Ainsworth entered the list with Rookwood, a story about Dick Turpin, in 1834; and Dickens published Oliver Twist in 1837-1838. In January, 1839, Ainsworth's Jack Sheppard, the most popular of all criminal romances, began to appear in Bentley's Miscellany.¹⁹

Thackeray was much against the sympathetic portrayal of a criminal. At the close of Chapter I in Catherine Thackeray stated:

We say, let your rogues in novels act like rogues, and your honest men like honest men; don't let us have any juggling and thimble-rigging with virtue and vice, so that, at the end of three

¹⁸ Charles Wells Moulton, ed., The Library of Literary Criticism of English and American Authors. Volume 6, p. 563.

¹⁹ Gordon N. Ray, Thackeray: The Uses of Adversity, p. 230.

volumes, the bewildered reader shall not know which is which; don't let us find ourselves kindling at the generous qualities of thieves and sympathizing with the rascalities of noble hearts.²⁰

Thackeray continued, that if the public actually demands stories about rogues,

. . . the only way in which poor authors, who must live, can act honestly by the public and themselves, is to paint such thieves as they are; not dandy, poetical, rose-water thieves, but real down-right scoundrels, leading scoundrelly lives, drunken, profligate, dissolute, low as scoundrels will be. They don't quote Plato like Eugene Aram; or live like gentlemen, and sing the pleasantest ballads in the world, like jolly Dick Turpin; or prate eternally. . . like that precious canting Maltravers, whom we all of us have read about and pitied; or die white-washed saints, like poor Bess Dadsy in Oliver Twist. No, . . . you. . . have no right to admire and sympathize with any such persons, fictitious or real: you ought to be made cordially to detest, scorn, loathe, abhor, and abominate all persons of this kidney.²¹

This criticism struck Dickens as missing the point of Oliver Twist. In 1841 he wrote a preface to the third edition of his novel, defending the book and explaining his aims and objectives when writing it. He directed his explanation toward those who had objected to the book on moral grounds--who felt that it dealt too much with the lives of criminals. He explained his use of the "very dregs of life" as characters in his book as follows:

In this spirit, when I wished to show, in little Oliver, the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance, and triumphing at last; And when I considered among what companions I could try him best, having regard to that kind of men into whose hands he would most naturally fall; I bethought myself of those who figure in these volumes. When I came to discuss the subject more maturely with myself, I saw many strong reasons for pursuing the course to which I was inclined. I had read of thieves by scores--seductive fellows (amiable for the most part), faultless in dress, plump in pocket, choice in horseflesh, bold in bearing, fortunate in gallantry, great at a song, a bottle, pack of cards, or dice-box, and fit companions for the bravest. But I had never met

²⁰William Makepeace Thackeray, Catherine, as quoted in Thackeray The Novelist by Geoffrey Tillotson, p. 134.

²¹Ray, op. cit., p. 231.

(except in Hogarth) with the miserable reality. It appeared to me that to draw a knot of associates in crime as really do exist; to paint them in all their deformity, in all their wretchedness, in all the squalid poverty of their lives; to show them as they really are, for ever sulking uneasily through the dirtiest paths of life, the great, black, ghastly gallows closing up their prospects, turn them where they may; it appeared to me that to do this, would be to attempt a something which was greatly needed, and which would be a service to society. And therefore I did it as I best could.²²

Thus Dickens claimed a desire to discredit the type of romantic criminal then currently popular in English fiction by painting the thief as he really existed. Further discussing his portrayal of the thief in

Oliver Twist Dickens wrote:

What manner of life is that which is described in these pages, as the everyday existence of a Thief? What charms has it for the young and ill-disposed, what allurements for the most jolter-headed of juveniles? Here are no canterings upon moonlit heaths, no merry-makings in the snugest of all possible caverns, none of the attractions of dress, no embroidery, no lace, no jack-boots, no crimson coats and ruffles, none of the dash and freedom with which 'the road' has been time out of mind, invested. The cold, wet, shelterless midnight streets of London; the foul and frowzy dens, where vice is closely packed and lacks the room to turn; the haunts of hunger and disease, the shabby rags that scarcely hold together; where are the attractions of these things? Have they no lesson, and do they not whisper something beyond the little-regarded warning of a moral precept?²³

Dickens thus was disclaiming any attempt at a romantic portrayal of the criminal in Oliver Twist. This, perhaps, was in answer to Thackeray, who had mentioned Dickens's books as being representative of the school of criminal romance. While Dickens definitely admitted that such a school of literature did exist, he insisted that he was no part of it. He cited John Gay's Beggar's Opera as being an example of this type of literature and admitted that Bulwer-Lytton's Paul Clifford would be in

²² Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist, p. XIV.

²³ Ibid., p. XV.

this category also. However, he referred to Paul Clifford as being an "admirable and most powerful" novel, thus freely admitting his respect for Bulwer's ability as an author. Consequently, one may assume that Dickens was familiar with Bulwer's novels, having read and admired them, and instances may be cited to demonstrate that the writing of Oliver Twist was influenced by what Lytton had written in his own books. Let us therefore examine the relationship of Oliver Twist to the other Newgate novels, and particularly to Paul Clifford, which had more influence on Dickens than has been commonly suspected.

A COMPARISON OF DICKENS AND BULWER-LYTTON

Jack Lindsay says that if we are to look for the sources of Oliver Twist, we should certainly turn to "Bulwer's rebellious Paul Clifford."²⁴ Consideration will now be given to both Bulwer and Paul Clifford, as well as to certain other books of this type.

Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer, the youngest son of General William Earle Bulwer of Heydon-Hall and Wood Dalling, Norfolk, and Elizabeth Barbara Lytton Bulwer, was born in London on May 25, 1803. His mother was the daughter of Richard Warburton Lytton of Knebworth, Hertfordshire, and it was after her death in 1843, when the younger Lytton succeeded to the Knebworth estate, that, under the terms of her will, he added the name of Lytton to his surname.

Bulwer was educated in private schools and at Trinity College and Trinity Hall, Cambridge. Before he went to Cambridge, he published a volume of verse and after leaving Cambridge he published some volumes

²⁴ Jack Lindsay, op. cit., p. 172.

of juvenalia which he afterward ignored. In 1827, after having gained the reputation of a society dandy, he married Rosina Doyle Wheeler in opposition to his mother's wishes. The latter withdrew the allowance that she had been bestowing upon him until this time, and he turned to the writing of novels as a source of income. His marriage was unhappy and his disputes with Lady Bulwer came into painful publicity. They were legally separated in 1836.

In 1831 Bulwer was elected to Parliament for St. Ives, Huntingdon. He was then returned for Lincoln in 1832, sitting for that city for nine years. He began his political career by supporting the Reform Bill, and a quarter of a century later he became Secretary for the Colonies. Despite social, political and matrimonial concerns, Lytton put his best energies into novel-writing. Pelham, or the Adventures of a Gentleman, published in 1828, was an immediate success. It was a study of the English dandy, and Lytton was able to portray faithfully the speech, dress, and pose of such an individual. The gossip of the time was busy identifying the characters of the romance with many well-known men and this book made Lytton famous eight years before *Pickwick* began to appear.

Bulwer was constantly under the pressure of his writing, because they lived on a grand scale and were continually in need of money. In order to keep his income commensurate with the demands of his creditors, he had been obliged to turn out at least one three-decker novel a year, sometimes two: Pelham and The Disowned in 1828; Devereaux, 1829; Paul Clifford, 1830. In the year of Robert's [his son] birth he published only the Siamese Twins, a satire in verse; but in this year Bulwer had succeeded Thomas Campbell as editor of the New Monthly Magazine, and Henry Colburn was an exacting proprietor. To meet the Hartford Street extravagances there were Eugene Aram, 1832, and Godolphin, 1833. During the ten years between 1827 and 1837, in addition to editing the

New Monthly and contributing to other periodicals, Bulwer published ten novels and two long poems, as well as six volumes of history and essays and one play.²⁵

Dickens's announced regard for Bulwer as a novelist is an established fact. His regard for Bulwer as a statesman follows naturally. Bulwer and Dickens held sympathetic views on many important issues, including the Reform Bill, abolition of Negro slavery, and the very controversial Sabbath Bills. While Dickens was still working for the Morning Chronicle, Sir Andrew Agnew sponsored a bill for the stricter observance of Sunday. Edward Bulwer spoke most strongly against the bill, arguing that it not merely had no warrant in Scripture, but was anti-Christian and anti-social. Dickens felt the Bill to be discriminatory against the poor, as it would forbid them the few enjoyments available to them on their one day free from hard toil, yet would leave the well-off untouched. Fearful lest the Bill become a law, Dickens wrote a pamphlet, Sunday Under Three Heads, signing it Timothy Sparks. This pamphlet, published in 1836, was dedicated to the Bishop of London, Dr. Blomfield, who had spoken of the viciousness of the Sunday excursions of the lower classes of society. Dickens asked what could be wrong with these people taking excursion boat trips and picnicking on Sunday, and why was it wrong for food stalls to open on Sunday in order that the poor people might have a meal. Many of these individuals worked late on Saturday night and must buy their provisions on Sunday. He then pointed out that the rich people were in no way hampered by Sabbath law--their servants could still cook for them, serve them, drive their carriages on Sunday, while they, themselves, were in no way stopped from indulging in private entertainments.

²⁵James William Thomas Ley, The Dickens Circle, p. 7.

Look at this Bill, he says, and see how far the fanatics are prepared to go. It proposes penalties for keeping shops open, for travelling on steamboats, attending public meetings and hiring carriages. It is an egregious specimen of legislative folly. Dickens had always been in favour of opening museums and galleries and of playing cricket on Sunday afternoons, for what point could there be in making the only holiday of the week miserable?²⁶

Sir Andrew's bill was defeated several weeks before Dickens's pamphlet came into print. However, when the bill was reintroduced again in 1837, perhaps Dickens's opinions had added to the weight of public sentiments, as the bill lingered in committee until Parliament was dissolved by the death of William IV. Sir Andrew was not elected to the new Parliament, and no legislator took any step to push the bill again.

In his book, The Dickens Circle, James W. T. Ley discusses the friendship between Bulwer and Dickens, two seemingly very different men, as follows:

It must be confessed that at first blush this friendship is rather difficult to understand. Superficially, Lytton had few of those qualities that one imagines appealed to Dickens. There is very little evidence in his books or his plays of those broad human sympathies that we find in Dickens. The impression is one of considerably more head than heart. But it is quite unjust thus to dismiss Lytton. Had circumstances behaved a little more kindly toward him he would have been a very different man from what he was, and the world might have been far more indebted to him than it is. A spoiled child, he early found himself compelled to write against time for money, whilst for very many years his life was embittered by the tragic failure of his marriage, and the persecution he suffered from his wife. The only wonder is that his earlier books do not bear more traces than they do of having been 'pot boilers,' and that his later work is not overcrowded with cynicism. Bred in a different school, blessed with a happy marriage, Lytton might have been a very great man.²⁷

Mr. Ley feels that conditions of life experienced by Dickens and Bulwer were not so dissimilar as one would imagine and that this could be a

²⁶Una Pope-Hennessy, Charles Dickens, p. 61.

²⁷James W. T. Ley, op. cit., p. 210.

part of the foundation of their friendship and understanding of one another. With this in mind he continued:

'All these things contributed to make me what I am,' wrote Dickens once when recalling his boyhood, and so might Lytton have written. His life's story is indeed a sad one; loneliness and lack of sympathy dogged him always, until in his later years he found much consolation in the affection of his son, Robert. His life, says his grandson, the present Earl Lytton, was on the whole a singularly lonely one. 'Neither in literature nor in politics did he belong to any intimate set. He went little into Society, and he never stayed for many months in the same place.'²⁸

According to Ley, the greatest friend Lytton ever had was John Forster, for whom his affection was deep and lasting. It was Forster who introduced Lytton to Dickens, it may be recalled, and Ley feels that next to Forster, Lytton regarded Dickens more highly than any other person. In trying to answer the question of why such a high mutual esteem developed between Lytton and Dickens, Ley put forth the following ideas:

First and foremost, I think, so far as Dickens, at any rate, was concerned, there was the high regard in which they both held their art. It was always a very strong point with Dickens, this jealousy for the dignity and reputation of his art. Literature was to Dickens a noble calling, not at any time to be held lightly, and in this he and Lytton were in complete sympathy. Of him he was able to say: 'In the path we both tread I have uniformly found him from the first the most generous of men; quick to encourage, slow to disparage, ever anxious to assert the order of which he is so great an ornament; never condescending to shuffle it off, and leave it outside the state rooms, as a Mussulman might leave his slippers outside a mosque.'²⁹

Thus, in summary, it would seem that Dickens and Lytton very likely had sympathetic views that led to such a mutual esteem as they felt for one another. Both had had lonely and unhappy childhoods; both depended upon writing as an important source of income, and yet both felt strongly

²⁸ Ibid., p. 210-211.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 211.

about the importance of literature as an art; both were strongly dependent upon the friendship of John Forster; and, perhaps, most important of all, both were vitally interested in political and moral reform, using their books as vehicles by which to further the causes that they wished to support.

In the years of 1837 and 1838, when Dickens was writing Oliver Twist, it is logical to assume that he should have been much more influenced by Lytton than Lytton by him. At this time, Dickens was still relatively unknown, though Pickwick had stirred general acclaim. Lytton, on the other hand, was approaching the zenith of his popularity, having already published ten novels, two long poems, six volumes of history and essays and a play, meanwhile editing The New Monthly Magazine. This array of works had brought him fame and monetary returns, both of which must have impressed the young Dickens. It is only natural, then, that the young, relatively inexperienced author, Dickens, should be greatly influenced by the more mature, famous and experienced writer, Bulwer-Lytton. Evidences of such influences are quite clear.

It was suggested earlier that Bulwer established the "School of Criminal Romance" in two of his early works, Paul Clifford (1830) and Eugene Aram (1832), a kind of writing which William Godwin had foreshadowed with Caleb Williams in 1794. The hero of Paul Clifford was a chivalrous highwayman, and the main character in Eugene Aram was a philosophising murderer. These two works were extremely popular with the reading public. Consequently, in 1834 Harrison Ainsworth followed the trend set by Lytton and published Rookwood in which he romanticized Dick Turpin, the highwayman. In these works, the criminals were sympathetically portrayed. Lytton, in particular, tried to show his heroes

as being victims of circumstances imposed upon them by a cruel and unfeeling society, which eventually forced them into a life of crime. He felt that not only should such criminal breeding conditions be removed, but also that the criminal laws were unjust and in grave need of reform. Paul Clifford, particularly, was designed to show how a youth with an unfortunate background and associations could be led into the paths of crime, but, being not completely evil, was capable of leading a good and useful life, once given the incentive and opportunity to repent and reform. Robert Bulwer Lytton (Owen Meredith) discussed his father's efforts to show the need for criminal law reform as being a basis for the writing of Paul Clifford, and also mentioned its effect upon the public as follows:

The publication of Paul Clifford did much to stimulate public opinion in favor of carrying criminal Law Reform far beyond the point at which it had been left by the labors of Romelly; and the book itself was an incident in my father's constant course of endeavor to improve the condition of that large portion of the population which is most tempted to crime through poverty and ignorance--not by the proclamation of utopian promises or recourse to violent constitutional changes, but through a better intellectual training facilitated by timely and administrative reforms.³⁰

The young Dickens, along with thousands of other readers, admired Paul Clifford and was wholly sympathetic with what Lytton was trying to do. Specific instances in this book are so similar to some of those appearing in Oliver Twist, that it becomes evident to the reader of both authors that Bulwer's influence upon Dickens contributed materially to the inspiration of Oliver's experiences.

³⁰ Earl Robert Bulwer Lytton, The Life, Letters and Literary Remains of Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, Volume 2, Chapter 13, Book 7, as quoted in The Library of Literary Criticism of English and American Authors, Volume 6, p. 687.

Paul Clifford is the story of a boy whose father is unknown and whose mother died when he was three years old. While still young, Paul is unjustly jailed on a theft charge, and while in jail he learns criminal ways. He later becomes a bandit-hero. When finally caught and brought to trial, he speaks to the jury and public as an ardent social reformer and rebel. He says that the usual policy of prisoners in such a situation as he finds himself is one of attempting to flatter the prejudices of the jury, praising justice and demanding mercy; but this, to him, seems idle, for he despises the laws which he has broken. These laws, he says, are of but two classes. One class makes criminals and the other punishes them. Therefore he has suffered by the one and expects to perish by the other. He eloquently states his case against the laws as follows:

My lord, it was the turn of a straw which made me what I am. Seven years ago I was sent to the house of correction for an offense which I did not commit; I went thither, a boy who had never infringed a single law--I came forth, in a few weeks, a man who was prepared to break all laws? When was this change?--was it my fault, or that of my condemners? You had first wronged me by a punishment which I did not deserve--you wronged me yet more deeply, when (even had I been guilty of the first offense) I was sentenced to herd with hardened offenders, and graduates in vice and vice's methods of support. The laws themselves caused me to break the laws: first, by implanting within me the goading sense of injustice; secondly, by submitting me to the corruption of example. Thus, I repeat--and I trust my words will sink solemnly into the hearts of all present--your legislation made me what I am! and it now destroys me, as it has destroyed thousands for being what it made me! ...Let those whom the law protects consider it a protector! when did it ever protect me? When did it ever protect the poor man? The government of a state, the institutions of law, profess to provide for all those who 'obey.' Mark! a man hungers--do you feed him? He is naked--do you clothe him? If not, you break your covenant, you drive him back to the first law of nature, and you hang him, not because he is guilty, but because you have left him naked and starving!³¹

³¹ Bulwer-Lytton, Paul Clifford, p. 440.

Paul Clifford is found guilty of his crimes and is sentenced to execution by hanging by a Judge Brandon who is his (unknown at this time) father. However, a relaxation of the sentence is obtained and Paul leaves the country, eventually making his way to America where he marries and becomes a wealthy and respected citizen.

Lytton was severely criticized for this book. The opinion concerning Paul Clifford expressed by one critic was that:

No one, we think, can read the work before us, without reprobation and disgust; no one, we mean, who is properly impressed with the importance of moral duty and religious obligation, or who feels sensible that the regulations of society, in regard to property, industry, and personal security, are entitled to any respect.³²

Despite such adverse reviews, Paul Clifford was an immediate success and two years later, in 1832, Bulwer published Eugene Aram, the story of a philosophical murderer. Eugene is presented as a shy and retiring but brilliant young scholar who prefers leading the life of a recluse. His means are modest, though sufficient for the quiet type of life that he leads. He is known throughout England and Europe for his great wisdom, and many learned and intelligent men seek to consult with him. It thus comes as a great shock to everyone concerned when he is proved by his enemies to have been an accomplice in the murder of a man many years before when he had been a young and struggling student. However, he had in no way profited from the murder of the man (who had been a scoundrel in his own right) and had lived an exemplary life from then on. Confessing his guilt, he commits suicide, leaving behind him many good people who still think very highly of him.

³²J. T. Austin, 1830, Paul Clifford, Christian Examiner, as quoted in The Library of Literary Criticism of English and American Authors, Volume 6, p. 636.

Eugene Aram was followed by Ernest Maltravers (1837) and its sequel, Alice: or the Mysteries in 1838. While Ernest Maltravers, himself, was no highwayman, murderer or other type of criminal, he had while still quite young seduced a young and innocent maiden, Alice, the daughter of a thief, intending to marry her. Circumstances prevent this, and the two books deal much with Alice, who despite hardships and persecution by her father and society, remains essentially innocent and pure of heart, finally becoming reunited with Ernest almost twenty years later. Although there are some similarities to be found by comparing Oliver Twist with Eugene Aram, Ernest Maltravers, and Alice: or the Mysteries, there are, by far, many more comparable events that may be demonstrated between Paul Clifford and Oliver Twist. These will now be pointed out.

Oliver Twist is the story of a pathetic workhouse orphan, who, despite his cruel and corrupt surroundings, manages to remain pure and good. Many instances in this book are reminiscent of events found in Paul Clifford. Both Oliver and Paul are orphans of unknown parentage. Paul's mother dies in poverty-stricken circumstances when Paul is only three years old. She has sought refuge at the Mug, a London public house of dubious repute, operated by Mrs. Margery Lobkins, sometimes familiarly called Piggy Lob. Paul's mother refuses to reveal her identity or the identity of Paul's father, though it is obvious that she is a lady of gentle birth and breeding. On the night that she dies, she seemingly wishes to communicate her history to Dummie Dunaker, a friend of Mrs. Lobkins, but her mind wanders so with fever that she is unable to do so. However, when she dies, Dummie is quick to investigate the situation as follows:

. . .Dummie, by the expiring ray of the candle that burnt in the death chamber, hastily opened a huge box (which was generally concealed under the bed, and contained the wardrobe of the deceased), and turned with irreverent hand over the linens and the silks, until quite at the bottom of the trunk he discovered some packets of letters;--these he seized, and buried in the convenience of his dress. He then, rising and replacing the box, cast a longing eye towards the watch on the toilet table, which was of gold; but he withdrew his gaze, and with a querulous sigh, observed to himself, 'The old blower kens o' that, od rat her! but howsomever, I'll take this; who knows but it may be of sarvice--tannies today may be smash tomorrow.'³³

Lytton explains the latter phrase as meaning that what is of no value now may be precious at a later time. And, indeed, this is true, as it provides the only clue to Paul's real identity, which becomes exceedingly important to Paul at a later date. Mrs. Lobkins adopts the child, and, not knowing his real name, must provide one for him.

As previous to his becoming the ward of Mrs. Lobkins, he had never received any other appellation than 'the child' so, the duty of christening him devolved upon our hostess of the Mug; and, after some deliberation, she blessed him with the name of Paul--it was a name of happy omen, for it had belonged to Mrs. Lobkins' grandfather, who had been three times transported, and twice hanged (at the first occurrence of the latter description, he had been restored by the surgeons, much to the chagrin of a young anatomist who was to have had the honor of cutting him up).³⁴

Compare this now with the early history of Oliver Twist. Oliver's mother, weak and ill, is found lying in the street and is taken to a workhouse the night before Oliver is born. No one knows where she has come from or where she was going. She dies only minutes after the birth of her son, seemingly incognito, since the attending surgeon remarks that it must be the same old story--no wedding ring plus a complete refusal to give her name. However, as later events prove, she had a gold wedding band and a locket, both of which had been stolen by an old work

³³ Bulwer-Lytton, op. cit., p. 238.

³⁴ Ibid.

house crone who had been attending her. The old lady pawned the items, but upon her death-bed, feeling oppressed by guilt, confesses enough to lead to their discovery. The ring is engraved with the first name of Oliver's mother as well as a date within a year before Oliver's birth. This information is later sufficient to help prove Oliver's identity. Since Oliver's mother dies, leaving her child without a name, one must be provided for him. Mr. Bumble, the beadle, later explains to Mrs. Mann, supervisor of the baby farm where Oliver spends the first nine years of his life, how he happened to give Oliver the name that he did.

We name our fondlings in alphabetical order. The last was a S,--Swubble, I named him. This was a T,--Twist, I named him. The next one as comes will be Unwin, and the next Vilkins. I have got names ready made to the end of the alphabet, and all the way through it again, when we come to 2.³⁵

The parallel situations in Paul Clifford and Oliver Twist thus become obvious, both novels starting starkly with a dramatic death-bed scene in which the mother of the hero dies, leaving him an unnamed orphan. However, the eventual identification of the child is provided for by the letters on the one hand and the ring and locket on the other. There are two major differences. In Paul Clifford the reader is made aware of the letters immediately, whereas in Oliver Twist the information emerges bit by bit more nearly towards the end of the book. Also, in Paul Clifford the child is given a home by Mrs. Lobkins, while Oliver becomes a charity ward. Dickens made the latter change, no doubt, in order to express his opinion of the workhouse and its associated evils.

Both Paul and Oliver spend their childhoods under conditions somewhat less than desirable. Paul's guardian, Mrs. Lobkins, loves him in

³⁵ Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist, pp. 7-8.

her fashion and tries to provide for his material and educational wants, but she herself is in advancing stages of alcoholism, and the general type of individual frequenting the Mug and that part of London in which the Mug is located was not of the highest type. At the age of sixteen, Paul, a romantic, sensitive young lad, argues with his guardian over some small gambling debts he has incurred and leaves the Mug in a bit of anger. He has thought about it previously; consequently when Mrs. Lobkins falls into a drunken rage, she provides sufficient incentive for his leaving.

Perhaps (for we must now direct a glance toward his domestic concerns) one great cause which drove Paul to Fish Lane was the uncomfortable life he led at home. For though Mrs. Lobkins was extremely fond of her protege, yet she was possessed, as her customers emphatically remarked, 'of the devil's own temper'; and her native coarseness never having been softened by those pictures of gay society which had in many a novel and comic farce refined the temperament of the romantic Paul, her manner of venting her maternal reproaches was certainly not a little revolting to a lad of some delicacy of feeling. Indeed it often occurred to him to leave her house altogether, and seek his fortune alone. ...³⁶

Upon leaving the Mug, Paul goes to the home of Mr. MacGrawler, his former tutor, and asks for a night's lodgings. MacGrawler, now a literary critic, soon discovers that Paul has writing abilities and agrees to let Paul work for him. However, when he cheats Paul out of his proper wages, Paul leaves him and once again has no place to go.

It is at this point that Paul happens to run across a casual acquaintance, Ned Pepper, better known as Long Ned. Long Ned escorts Paul to a small tavern and orders food and drink for the hungry boy. Paul relates his recent experiences, stating that he is looking for a profession.

³⁶ Bulwer-Lytton, op. cit., p. 250.

This last part of Paul's confessions secretly delighted the soul of Long Ned; for that experienced collector of the highways--(Ned, was, indeed, of no less noble a profession)--had long fixed an eye upon our hero, as one whom he thought likely to be an honor to that enterprising calling which he espoused, and an useful assistant to himself. He had not, in his earlier acquaintance with Paul, when the youth was under the roof and the surveillance of the practised and wary Mrs. Lobkins, deemed it prudent to expose the exact nature of his own pursuits, and had contented himself by gradually ripening the mind and the finances of Paul into that state when the proposition of a leap from a hedge would not be likely greatly to revolt the person to whom it was made. He now thought his time was at hand;. ...³⁷

Ned offers to tutor Paul in the career of a highwayman-robber, but Paul refuses, saying he has scruples against such a profession, and starts to leave the tavern. However, Ned persuades him to attend a play with him that night, since Paul professes an interest in acting. During the evening in the theater Paul notices a lovely young lady of about thirteen years and her older escort. This couple leaves the theater at the same time that Paul and Ned do and walk toward a carriage.

'Come on!' said Long Ned, hastily, and walking in the same direction with [sic] the strangers had taken. Paul readily agreed; they soon overtook the strangers. Long Ned walked the nearest to the gentleman, and brushed by him in passing. Presently a voice cried, 'Stop thief!' and Long Ned saying to Paul 'Shift for yourself--run!' darted from our hero's side into the crowd and vanished in a twinkling. Before Paul could recover his amaze, he found himself suddenly seized by the collar; he turned abruptly, and saw the dark face of the young lady's companion.³⁸

Though Paul protests his innocence, he is taken into custody as Long Ned's accomplice in the stealing of the gentleman's watch. Long Ned is not captured, however, leaving Paul to face the charge alone. Paul attempts to escape, but is struck down by one of his captors, only to awaken in the watch house.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 261.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 264.

In Oliver Twist we find young Oliver undergoing experiences that lead to a similar conclusion. Upon leaving the baby farm, he is conducted by Mr. Bumble to the workhouse and is set to work picking oakum. He remains here for about three months, until the fatal evening when at meal time he asks for more food. The following day a bill is posted, offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who will take Oliver as an apprentice. Oliver finally is apprenticed to an undertaker, Mr. Sowerberry, and thus leaves the workhouse. Life for Oliver in the Sowerberry household is not at all pleasant. Although Mr. Sowerberry shows a certain amount of kindness towards the boy, Mrs. Sowerberry, her maid Charlotte, and Mr. Sowerberry's other apprentice, the charity-boy, Noah Claypole, treat Oliver miserably.

After enduring as much cruel treatment as he can, Oliver finally runs away from the household, and, knowing nowhere else to go, heads toward London, some sixty-five miles distant. The nine-year-old boy has little food and money. After seven days Oliver almost reaches London, but is so weak from lack of food that he finally can continue no longer. He crouches on a door-step, having no heart to beg for food. Eventually a boy of about his own age comes along and inquires as to his difficulty. Upon hearing that Oliver is tired and hungry, he buys his food and drink and offers him shelter once they arrive in London, saying that a "spectable old genelman" he knows will be glad to aid Oliver.

This unexpected offer of shelter was too tempting to be resisted; especially as it was immediately followed up, by the assurance that the old gentleman referred to, would doubtless provide Oliver with a comfortable place without loss of time. This led to a more friendly and confidential dialogue; from which Oliver discovered that his friend's name was Jack Dawkins, and that he was a peculiar pet and protege of the elderly gentleman before mentioned.³⁹

³⁹Dickens, op. cit., p. 51.

Jack Dawkins, better known to his friends as "The Artful Dodger," thus takes Oliver to a house in a dirty and wretched part of London. Here Oliver is introduced to a villainous and repulsive-looking, shriveled old Jew, Fagin. Fagin gives Oliver food and a place to sleep.

In the following days Oliver remains in Fagin's room, picking the marks out of pocket-handkerchiefs that the Dodger and Charley Bates (another boy living in the household) bring home. Each morning they all play together a "game" of picking pockets. Finally one day Oliver is allowed to go out with the boys to work, though he does not realize what the work is to be. It is not until he sees the Dodger steal a handkerchief from the pocket of an old man who is standing at a book stand and then hand it to Charley Bates, both of them quickly running away, that Oliver finally realizes their true trade. Oliver, confused and frightened, runs also.

This was all done in a minute's space. In the very instant when Oliver began to run, the old gentleman, putting his hand in his pocket, and missing his handkerchief, turned sharp around. Seeing the boy scudding away at such a rapid pace, he very naturally concluded him to be the depredator; and, shouting, 'Stop thief!' with all his might, made off after him, book in hand.⁴⁰

Oliver is pursued by a number of men and boys, and is finally brought down by a blow. He is identified by the old man as the thief and is led off to a cell.

Thus the parallel between Oliver Twist and Paul Clifford once more becomes apparent. Oliver Twist contains the original materials of the workhouse and the undertaker's shop, but both boys find themselves hungry, homeless, and penniless, only to be befriended by someone they

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 62.

happen to meet. In both cases the benefactors are young criminals who ply their pickpocket trade, Oliver and Paul, the innocent bystanders, being accused of participating in the crime.

At this point Dickens departs from the general plot of Lytton. Both Paul and Oliver are brought before a justice or magistrate, but the outcomes of the hearings are totally different. Paul's accuser, a lawyer by the name of Brandon, demands justice and, accordingly, Paul is sentenced to three months in Bridewell prison. Oliver, however, is much more fortunate. His accuser, Mr. Brownlow, decides that Oliver is innocent and refuses to prefer charges against the boy. Oliver, obviously ill, is discharged and Mr. Brownlow takes him home with him, seeing that he is well cared for.

In prison Paul becomes friendly with Augustus Tomlinson, an embezzler and thief, who has also "worked" with Long Ned Pepper. Tomlinson tells his rather fascinating life history to Paul.

The history of this gentleman made a deep impression on Paul. The impression was strengthened by the conversations subsequently holden with Augustus. That worthy was a dangerous and subtle persuader. He had really read a good deal of history, and something of morals, and he had an ingenious way of defending his rascally practices by syllogisms from the latter, examples from the former. These theories he clenched as it were, by reference to the existing politics of the day. Cheaters of the public, on false pretenses, he was pleased to term 'moderate Whigs;' bullying demanders of your purse were 'high Tories;' and thieving in gangs was 'the effect of the spirit of the party.' There was this difference between Augustus Tomlinson and Long Ned: Ned was the acting knave; Augustus, the reasoning one; and we may see, therefore, by a little reflection, that Tomlinson was a far more perilous companion than Pepper, for showy theories are always more seductive to the young and clever than suasive examples, and the vanity of the youthful makes them better pleased by being convinced of a thing, than by being enticed to it.⁴¹

⁴¹Bulwer-Lytton, op. cit., pp. 278-279.

Three weeks after Paul arrives in prison, Tomlinson informs him of a plan to escape that he has devised. He persuades Paul to join him in an attempt to execute this plan and they are successful. Tomlinson then proceeds to convince Paul that there is little other way to gain a livelihood now than thieving, and Paul finally agrees, even though he still has his scruples against such a profession. Paul is taken to a meeting place of the thieves, the Jolly Angler, and here once more meets Long Ned. Paul is at first angry with Long Ned, but all differences are resolved and Paul, Ned and Tomlinson decided to work together.

Within six years Paul becomes the leader of the band of highwaymen, assuming the "professional" name of Captain Lovett. One day, while pretending to save a doctor from highwaymen in order to gain information concerning the expected arrival in that vicinity of a prosperous nobleman, Lord Mauleverer, Paul happens to meet Lucy Brandon, niece of the lawyer whose watch Paul had been accused of stealing six years before. It was she who had been with Brandon at the theater that night, and it is she and her father whom Mauleverer is coming to visit. Paul is attracted to Lucy, but, after robbing Mauleverer, leaves the vicinity.

The following summer the bandit trio makes its way to Bath, where the wealthy people of England are to be found in great numbers. Lucy and her father are there also, guests of the lawyer Brandon, who is promoting a romance between his niece and Lord Mauleverer. One day, as Paul and Augustus Tomlinson are pensively strolling along the countryside around Bath, Tomlinson asks Paul if he ever repents his present way of life and if he feels that he might be happier as an honest middle-class shop boy. Paul's reply is quick and positive, as follows:

'Repent!' said Clifford, fiercely; and his answer opened more of his secret heart, its motives, its reasonings, and its peculiarities, than were often discernable. 'Repent--that is the idlest word in our language. No--the moment I repent, that moment I reform! Never can it seem to me an atonement for crime merely to regret it--my mind would lead me not to regret, but to repair!--Repent!--no, not yet. The older I grow, the more I see of men and of the callings of social life--the more I, an open knave, sicken at the glossed and covert dishonesties around. I acknowledge no allegiance to society. From my birth to this hour, I have received no single favor from its customs or its laws;--openly I war against it, and patiently will I meet its revenge. This may be crime; but it looks light in my eyes when I gaze around, and survey on all sides the masked traitors who acknowledge large debts to society,--who profess to obey all its laws--adore its institutions--and, above all--oh, how righteously!--attack all those who attack it, and who yet lie, and cheat, and defraud, and speculate,--publicly reaping all the comforts, privately filching all the profits. Repent!--of what? I came into the world friendless and poor--I find a body of laws hostile to the friendless and the poor! To those laws hostile to me, then, I acknowledge hostility in my turn. Between us are the conditions of war. Let them expose a weakness--I insist on my right to seize the advantage: let them defeat me, and I allow them their right to destroy.'⁴²

Although Lytton footnotes this passage with the remark that these are the sentiments of Paul Clifford and not of the author, it still is one of a number of passages in Lytton's writings which insist that English laws were not altogether just and fair for the poor. This passage is important also because it prepares the way for the possibility of a completely changed Paul Clifford in the future. He states that when he repents his present type of life, he will, indeed, do something about it, for regret can never be sufficient atonement for crime.

However, Paul, at this point, is not ready to give up his life of crime and becomes involved in further plots against the wealthy residents in and around Bath. Meanwhile, being more and more in the presence of Lucy, he falls in love with her and she with him. Lytton again explains

⁴² Ibid., p. 335.

that Paul still has many good and generous qualities and even has shown a certain amount of generosity and chivalry within the practices of his profession.

Although the name of Lovett, by which he was chiefly known, was peculiarly distinguished in the annals of the adventurous, it had never been coupled with rumors of cruelty or outrage; and it was often associated with anecdotes of courage, courtesy, good humor, or forbearance.⁴³

The author also states that Paul was an individual who could be softened and redeemed by a real love, thus once again preparing the reader for an eventual redemption of the hero. In case the reader might wonder how Paul with his background could ever be refined enough to win the love of Lucy, the author writes:

We trust that the reader has already perceived that, despite his early circumstances, his manner and address were not such as to unfit him for a lady's love. The comparative refinement of his exterior is easy of explanation, for he possessed a natural and inborn gentility, a quick turn for observation, a ready sense both of the ridiculous and the graceful; and these are materials which are soon and lightly wrought from coarseness to polish. He had been thrown, too, among the leaders and heroes of his band; many not absolutely low in birth, nor debased in habit.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, the author also starts to prepare the reader for another future event--the establishment of Paul's true identity. The scene switches temporarily to London where William Brandon, in court, is examining a go-between in a swindling transaction. The name of the go-between is not mentioned, but the reader can tell by his manner of speaking that it is none other than Dummie Dunaker. Brandon, being in a bad mood that morning after receiving news from Mauleverer that Lucy is infatuated with Clifford, contrary to Brandon's hopes and plans, is particularly severe with the culprit, who finally mutters, "Aha!--if

⁴³Ibid., p. 345.

⁴⁴Ibid.

so be Counsellor Prandon, you knew vat I knows, you would not go for to bully I so!"⁴⁵ With this the witness lapses into a sullen silence, but is finally goaded by Brandon into saying, "Hax Mr. Swoppem (the pawn-broker) what I sold 'im on the 15th of February, exactly twenty-three years ago?"⁴⁶ Brandon is obviously startled, but the witness refuses to speak further. However, Brandon is so shaken by what was said that he is unable to conclude the case properly and a verdict of "not guilty" is given. As soon as court adjourns, Brandon hastens to the pawn-broker's shop where, in a drawer, Brandon finds and recognizes an old ring inscribed, "W. B. to Julia." He also finds a small miniature with the inscription "Sir John Brandon, 1635 AEtat. 28" on the back of it, as well as a seal stamped with the crest of the house of Brandon. These articles he pockets triumphantly, rewarding Mr. Swoppem well for them. Then later in the evening he contacts the ex-witness and pays him well for his silence. Thus does the reader get his first inkling of a connection between Paul Clifford and William Brandon, and Brandon makes it clear that he intends to keep all of his information a secret.

The mystery of Oliver's parentage has a similar development, even though Oliver does not become a criminal. Dickens, too, includes an episode in which the means of identifying Oliver fall into the hands of one who wishes Oliver's identity to remain secret. When Oliver is dismissed from the magistrate's office, Mr. Brownlow takes him home with him and there the boy is fed and cared for. There is a portrait of a young lady on the wall of Mrs. Bedwin's (the housekeeper) room. One day when Oliver is in there, Mr. Brownlow enters and, suddenly startled:

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 346.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

. . .pointed hastily to the picture over Oliver's head, and then to the boy's face. There was its living copy. The eyes, the head, the mouth; every feature was the same. The expression was, for the instant, so precisely alike, that the minutest line seemed copied with startling accuracy.⁴⁷

The reader is left in suspense at this point, however, as the scene shifts back to Fagin's apartment where Fagin, Charley Bates, the Dodger, and two other friends, the robber, Bill Sikes, and his girl friend, Nancy, are plotting how to get Oliver back into their power once more. Nancy, pretending to be Oliver's sister, finds at the jail that he has been released and eventually finds where he is staying. One day Oliver, running an errand for Mr. Brownlow, is seen by Nancy. Once more pretending to be his sister, she accuses him of running away from home and is helped by passers-by in taking him with her. Soon Oliver is again under the power of Fagin.

Sikes and a fellow robber, Toby Crackit, plan to burglarize a home in the outskirts of London. They plan to use Oliver for effecting an entry into the house. Only he is small enough to gain entry by means of a tiny, insecurely fastened window of a scullery in that house. Oliver is instructed to unlock the street door in order that Sikes and Crackit might enter. Oliver hopes to be able to alarm the family, but before he can plan anything, two men open the door and shoot. They are servants who were awakened by some slight noise the robbers have made. Oliver is wounded, but Sikes drags him back out through the window. The criminals are pursued and finally, in order to save themselves, Sikes and Crackit leave the wounded Oliver in a ditch. He spends the night there, but the following morning manages to make his way back to the house, where he collapses.

⁴⁷Dickens, op. cit., p. 76.

The house is occupied by two ladies and their servants. One lady, Mrs. Maylie, is quite advanced in years, while the other, Miss Rose, is a fair maiden of seventeen. Although they and the attending doctor, Mr. Losberne, are certain that Oliver is one of the housebreakers, they feel sympathy for him because of his youth and appearance. They manage to protect him from the officers sent from London to investigate the attempted crime. Oliver, despite his workhouse upbringing and exposure to vice, still remains a gentle, innocent, polite lad. The family becomes quite fond of him and he is soon nursed back to health by them. He, like Paul Clifford, has a natural gift of good language and good taste. He constantly assures the Maylies of his love and gratitude towards them for all they have done for him. Typical of this is a conversation between Rose and Oliver, when Oliver says:

Oh! dear lady, if I could but work for you; if I could only give you pleasure by watering your flowers, or watching your birds, or running up and down the whole day long, to make you happy; what would I give to do it!⁴⁸

While Oliver is living so ideally in the Maylie household, events are occurring that will be of future importance to him. One night in the workhouse where Oliver was born, an old woman is dying. This old woman has a confession that she feels she must make before she dies. To Mrs. Corney, the workhouse matron, she tells how she robbed the body of Oliver's mother the night she died. Oliver's mother had worn a gold locket which she had asked the old crone to keep safe, implying that it would provide a clue to Oliver's identity. The old crone says that she had stolen the locket, but dies without saying where it now is.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 213.

Some time later, Mrs. Corney marries Mr. Bumble, the beadle. One day he chances to meet in a tavern a strange man who says he is interested in information concerning the old lady who had nursed Oliver's mother. Mr. Bumble, knowing his wife has some information, arranged for her to meet this stranger, named Monks, who is willing to pay well for her information. In Dickens's novel, the man desiring the proof of Oliver's identity is his half-brother, not the hero's father. Mrs. Bumble tells how the old lady has grasped a scrap of dirty paper in her hand as she died, this paper proving to be a pawnbroker's duplicate. Mrs. Bumble had redeemed the pledge and had now brought the items, wrapped in a small packet, with her. The redeemed pledge was a little gold locket within which there were two locks of hair, as well as a plain gold wedding band.

'It has the word "Agnes" engraved on the inside,' said the woman. 'There is a blank left for the surname; and then follows the date; which is within a year before the child was born. I found out that.'⁴⁹

The meeting between the Bumbles and Monks takes place in an old house on the bank of a river. Monks says that he intends for the information he has just obtained never to be used against him and opens a trap door leading to the water.

Monks drew the little packet from his breast, where he had hurriedly thrust it; and tying it to a leaden weight, which had formed a part of a pulley, and was lying on the floor, dropped it into the stream. It fell straight, and as true as a die; clove the water with a scarcely audible splash; and was gone.⁵⁰

Thus, in Oliver Twist, as in Paul Clifford, the seemingly only tangible clue to the identity of each youth is sought and gained by one who does

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 262.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 263.

not wish the identification to become publicly known. The Bumbles are well paid for their trouble and will be quiet, for if they tell, they will also implicate themselves in the dishonest affair. At this point, however, the reader still does not know why Mr. Brandon, in the one case, and Monks, in the other, desire the information to remain secret. Both seem to have strong personal involvement, but the exact nature of the involvement can only be speculated upon by the reader.

In both books events progress rapidly after the incidents involving the pawned items. In Paul Clifford, Lord Mauleverer has become extremely jealous of Paul, as it becomes more and more obvious that Lucy prefers the latter. He writes to Lawyer Brandon concerning this and the lawyer advises his brother and niece to associate no longer with Paul since they really do not know who he is and where he is from. Lawyer Brandon's wishes are obeyed and both Paul and Lucy are most unhappy. One night Lord Mauleverer gives a fashionable ball, to which Lucy and her father, but not Paul, are invited. Paul, desperate to talk with Lucy, manages to convey secretly a message to her, asking her to meet him in Mauleverer's garden. When they meet, she presses him for his identity which, of course, he cannot reveal to her. He says he has come only to see her once more and that though he loves her, he knows he is unworthy of her. As he leaves the garden, he is met by Mauleverer who insults him in front of the other guests. Paul, though angered, leaves before resorting to any violence.

Returning to the quarters of Tomlinson and Pepper, Paul finds that they are out on the road, hoping to rob guests returning from Mauleverer's ball. He quickly follows them, arriving only in time to halt them amidst their attempt at robbing Lucy and her father. The

latter are grateful to Paul, and Mr. Brandon, realizing how much Lucy loves Paul, no longer objects to their romance. Paul, very agitated, declares his love for Lucy, but again says he is unworthy of her. He leaves, declaring that she will receive a letter from him that night. In this letter to Lucy, Paul once more professes his unworthiness to marry her and says he is leaving Bath. Lucy's father dies soon after and lawyer Brandon, having been appointed Lucy's guardian, takes her to London to live with him. Here he hopes to further his plans for the marriage of Lucy to Lord Mauleverer, and invites Mauleverer to come to London also. As Mauleverer journeys to London, he is robbed once again by the three highwaymen, Tomlinson, Pepper, and Paul, who then flee to a well-hidden cavern that is their hiding place. This cavern is known as Red Cave and the bandits have made themselves an ingenious and cozy hideout there.

At Red Cave the reader once more meets Mr. MacGrawler, Paul's ex-tutor. He now is cook for the outlaw band, having been unable to obtain and keep any other employment lately. What Paul does not know is that MacGrawler has betrayed the band to the police and has arranged for their being captured in the cave during the night. The police proceed according to plan, but although Tomlinson and Pepper are captured, Paul manages to escape. He makes his way to London, and once more sees Lucy, who has refused the hand of Mauleverer. He tells her he is going to enlist in the foreign service, hoping to become one whom she can respect. However, before leaving, he executes a plan to release Tomlinson and Pepper as they are being taken to prison. They escape, but Paul is wounded and captured.

Mauleverer identifies certain of his stolen belongings found in the Red Cave. He sees Captain Lovett and recognizes that the latter and Paul Clifford are one and the same individual. He conveys the information to Brandon, who says that the news must be kept from Lucy. Meanwhile Brandon has regained possession of a group of letters he had written to a girl by the name of Julia 25 years before. These letters are love letters and give the reader the story of Brandon's life and his love for Julia, the girl he married. The reader is then told the story of their married life.

Because Brandon had married secretly and beneath him, he, for the moment, had given up his great ambitions and lived quietly with his bride under the assumed name of Wellman in a small country town. They had a son and seemed ideally happy until a young nobleman was thrown from his horse and injured in front of their house. They cared for him and Brandon, jealously noticing that the young nobleman seemed attracted to his wife, planned how he could rid himself of her and of the life he had secretly begun to hate. He planned to encourage an affair between his wife and the young man, telling the latter that she really was not his wife, but his mistress. As he made these plans, his thoughts were as follows:

Let me see,--yes! I have a remedy. . .I was married privately,--well! under disguised names,--well! it was a stolen marriage, far from her town,--well! witnesses unknown to her,--well! proofs easily secured to my possession,--excellent! the fool shall believe it was a forged marriage, an ingenious gallantry of mine; I will wash out the stain cuckold with the water of another word; I will make market of a mistress, not a wife. I will warn him not to acquaint her with this secret; let me consider for what reason,--oh! my son's legitimacy may be convenient to me hereafter. He will understand that reason, and I will have his 'honor' thereon. And by the way, I do care for that legitimacy, and will guard the proofs; I love my child,--ambitious men do love their children;

I may become a lord myself, and may wish for a lord to succeed me; and that son is mine; thank Heaven! I am sure on that point,-- the only child, too, that ever shall arise to me. Never, I swear, will I again put myself beyond my own power! All my nature, save one passion, I have hitherto mastered; that passion shall henceforth be my slave, my only thought be ambition, my only mistress be the world!⁵¹

Brandon's plan worked and his wife eloped with the young nobleman. Brandon and his son immediately left the village and were never heard of again, as he once more assumed his rightful name of Brandon instead of Wellman. Brandon rapidly rose in the world of law and began to receive the fame and position he so desired. As no one knew he had been married, the appearance of his son raised some scandal at first, but he gave out the story that it was the orphan child of a dear friend he had known abroad, and people soon came to accept the story. Meanwhile, Julia's affair with her paramour had ended and she had nothing left but the love letters she and Brandon had once written to each other. She was lost and unhappy. One night she and Brandon chanced to meet and he loosed all of his pent-up bitterness upon her. It was just three nights later than his house was broken into and his son kidnapped. Brandon employed every means he could to find his son, but was unsuccessful. Lytton ends this melodramatic and romantically complicated flash-back of Brandon's life in a manner designed to prepare the reader for the eventual dramatic moments concerned with the revelation of Paul's identity as follows:

Fate treasured in her gloomy womb, altogether undescried by man, the hour and the scene in which the most ardent wish of William Brandon was to be realized.⁵²

⁵¹ Bulwer-Lytton, op. cit., p. 421.

⁵² Ibid., p. 425.

As fate would have it, the judge who is to try Paul's case is Sir William Brandon. Meanwhile, Tomlinson has escaped from England and Pepper is hiding out at The Mug. Dummie Dunnaker, recognizing Pepper, asks him if he knows where Paul is. Dummie then relates the story of Paul's history--how he had helped Paul's mother kidnap him from his father, how, when Paul's mother died, he had taken her letters, etc., and then how, at a later time, he had confronted Paul's father with the information, whetting the man's curiosity as to the identity and whereabouts of his son.

He then proceeded to state how, unable any where to find Paul, or any trace of him, he amused the sire from time to time with forged excuses;--how, at first, the sums he received made him by no means desirous to expedite a discovery that would terminate such satisfactory receipts;--how at length the magnitude of the proffered reward, joined to the threats of the sire, had made him become seriously anxious to learn the real fate and present 'whereabout' of Paul;--how, the last time he had seen the father, he had, by way of propitiation and first fruit, taken to him all the papers left by the unhappy mother and secreted by himself; and how he was now delighted to find that Ned was acquainted with Paul's address. Since he despaired of finding Paul by his own exertions alone, he became less tenacious of his secret, and he now proffered Ned, on discovery of Paul, a third of what reward the whole of which he had once hoped to engross.⁵³

Dummie, unwilling to tell Ned the name of Paul's father until he finds out where Paul is, finally learns from Ned that Paul is in reality the famous Captain Lovett, who is being tried for robbery. Ned then presses for Dummie to identify Paul's father. "At this question, the expression of Dummie's face fell,--a sudden horror struggled to his eyes."⁵⁴

The morning of the trial Sir William receives notification that the king is creating four peerages and that Brandon's name stands second on

⁵³Ibid., p. 433.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 434.

the list. Thus, one of Brandon's chief ambitions in life is soon to be fulfilled. Ironically, as he leaves to go into the courtroom, his main wish is that he could find his son and thus establish the succession of his title.

MacGrawler's testimony against Paul clearly points to his guilt. Paul is then called upon to defend himself and does so with surprising eloquence, stating as mentioned previously, that he has been a victim of the law.

So different had been the defense of the prisoner from that which had been expected; so assuredly did the more hackneyed part of the audience, even as he had proceeded, imagine that, by some artful turn, he would at length wind into the usual courses of defense, that when his unfaltering and almost stern accents paused, men were not prepared to feel that his speech was finished, and that pause involuntarily jarred on them, as untimely and abrupt.⁵⁵

Even the judge was favorably impressed by the witness's defense, "... for in the scorn of the hollow institutions, and the mock honesty of social life, so defyingly manifested by the prisoner, Brandon recognized elements of mind remarkably congenial to his own. ..." ⁵⁶ Brandon soon is recalled to himself, however, by a murmur of vague applause circling around the common crowd in the courtroom and orders silence in the court. He then addresses the jury, dwelling upon the evidence pointing against Paul, and gradually the favorable impression made by Paul fades away. The jury retires to reach a verdict. About twenty minutes after the jury leaves the room, a rudely dressed man breaks into the courtroom and insists upon giving a note to the judge. The contents of the note are as follows:

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 441.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 442.

MY LORD JUDGE

I make bold to beg you will do all you can for the prisoner at the barre; as he is no other than the 'Paul' I spoke to your Worship about. You know what I mean.

DUMMIE DUNMAKER⁵⁷

Though at first betraying evidences of a severe shock, Brandon quickly recovers his composure and, calling Dummie a madman, orders him to be locked up alone.

Shortly after this interruption, the jury returns with the verdict of guilty, coupled with a strong recommendation for mercy. Paul is then asked, as a matter of form, if there is any reason why the sentence of death should not be passed against him. Paul's answering speech is a high point of dramatic irony, as he looks at Brandon and accuses him of being the one who unjustly started him on his paths of crime. Lytton's attack here is aimed not only at Judge Brandon in Paul Clifford but also, once again, at law and officials in general. Paul's charge is as follows:

My lord. . .I have but one reason to advance against the sentence of the law. If you have interest to prevent or mitigate it, that reason will, I think, suffice to enlist you on my behalf. I said that the first cause of those offences against the law which bring me to the bar, was the committing me to the prison on a charge of which I was wholly innocent! My lord judge, you were the man who accused me of that charge, and subjected me to that imprisonment! Look at me well, my lord, and you may trace in the countenance of the hardened felon you are about to adjudge to death the features of a boy whom, some seven years ago, you accused before a London magistrate of the theft of your watch. On the oath of a man who has one step on the threshold of death, the accusation was unjust. And, fit minister of the laws you represent! You, who will now pass my doom,--you were the cause of my crimes! My lord, I have done. I am ready to add another to the long and dark list of the victims who are first polluted, and then sacrificed, by the blindness and the injustice of human codes!⁵⁸

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 443.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 443-444.

Although Judge Brandon looks haggard and death-like as Paul finishes his accusations, he doesn't flinch, and meets the direct gaze of the prisoner. Then the reader is impressed in a dramatic way with the true relationship between the two men as follows:

But, as alone conspicuous throughout the breathless crowd, the judge and criminal gazed on each other; and as the eyes of the spectators wandered on each, a thrilling and electric impression of a powerful likeness between the doomed and the doomer, for the first time in the trial, struck upon the audience, and increased though they scarcely knew why, the sensation of pain and dread which the prisoner's last words excited. ...the resemblance between the men, placed as they were in such vividly different circumstances--that resemblance which. . .at certain moments occurred startlingly to Lucy--was plain and unavoidably striking: the same the dark hue of their complexions, the same the haughty and Roman outline of their faces, the same the height of the forehead, the same even a displeasing and sarcastic rigidity of mouth, which made the most conspicuous feature in Brandon, and which was the only point that deteriorated from the angular beauty of Clifford. But, above all, the same inflexible defying, stubborn spirit, though in Brandon it assumed the stately cast of majesty, and in Clifford it seemed the desperate sternness of the brave, stamped itself in both.⁵⁹

Brandon, hoping that no one will find out Paul's true identity, sentences Paul to death, stating that the recommendation for mercy will probably meet with little success. With this Brandon leaves the courtroom and consults further with Dummie and Ned Pepper, finally telling them that he does not believe their story. However, he does pay them and orders them never to mention the incident to anyone. Brandon then leaves to dine with Mauleverer and six friends, but apparently suffers a stroke enroute in his carriage, arriving at Mauleverer's lifeless.

Mauleverer finds Dummie's note in Brandon's pocket and, knowing that Brandon had been searching for his son, contacts Dummie. Convinced

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 444.

that Paul is Brandon's son, Mauleverer obtains a relaxation of sentence, Paul now being condemned to perpetual transportation. Lucy learns of his identity and goes to his cell the night before he leaves the country. They arrange to try to meet abroad in approximately a year and then to marry. Lucy transfers her wealth to France, leaves England and eventually disappears completely. Paul escapes and he and Lucy build a new and happy life together in America, where they are respected and esteemed by all for their good works and deeds.

Lytton, knowing the reader would be interested in the fate of the other characters in the novel, discusses them also. Augustus Tomlinson ". . .ultimately betook himself to a certain literary city in Germany, where he became distinguished for his metaphysical acumen, and opened a school of morals on the Grecian model taught in the French tongue."⁶⁰ Pepper, not fortunate enough to escape the police, is seized, tried and sentenced to seven years' transportation to Botany Bay. At the expiration of his time he refuses to return to England, marrying and settling permanently in Australia. Thus these two gentlemen also give up their professions of crime, living out their lives in an aura of respectability. Lytton, defending this type of happy ending for his ex-criminals, concludes his book as follows:

Who will condemn us for preferring the moral of that fate to the moral which is extorted from the gibbet and the hulks?--which makes scarecrows, not beacons, terrifies our weakness, not warns our reason. Who does not allow that it is better, to repair than to perch,--better, too, to atone as the citizen than to repent as the hermit? . . .Mark this truth, all ye gentlemen of England, who would make laws as the Romans made fusces--a bundle of rods with an axe in the middle; mark it, and remember! long may it live,

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 450.

allied with hope in ourselves, but with gratitude in our children; --long after the book which it now 'adorns' and 'points' has gone to its dusty slumber; long, long after the feverish hand which now writes it down can defend or enforce it no more;--'THE VERY WORST USE TO WHICH YOU CAN PUT A MAN IS TO HANG HIM.'⁶¹

Whether or not Lytton's novel is deserving of the scorn heaped upon it by such critics as Thackeray is not the concern of this study. However, it is clear that the parallels between Paul Clifford and Oliver Twist are now becoming evident, and more similarities are to be demonstrated. (In fact, parallels with the mother-daughter plot of Bleak House, or the Australian convict theme in Great Expectations might be drawn.) A minor, yet concrete, example can be drawn from material quoted in the foregoing discussion of Paul Clifford's trial compared with that quoted concerning Oliver Twist's sojourn in the home of Mr. Brownlow. The case in point is that of the striking and startling resemblances between the hero and his unknown parent. In Paul Clifford, the throng in the court room becomes aware of the "powerful likeness" between the judge and the prisoner in both facial feature and expression, as well as in a defiant stubbornness of spirit. This happens at the moment when Paul is accusing the judge of ruining his life for him. In Oliver Twist, Mr. Brownlow, entering Mrs. Bedwin's room and seeing Oliver in front of the portrait of a young lady (Oliver's unknown mother) is struck by the fact that Oliver's face is a "living copy" of the face in the portrait. Such an incident, though minor, adds a dramatic force to the story and as Dickens read Lytton's work he could well have realized this, reflecting the effect in his own book. Both men were melodramatists at heart, as their works amply illustrate.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 452.

Our discussion of the story of *Oliver Twist* was interrupted with the incident involving Monks and the Bumbles. The story's action proceeds rapidly from this point. Nancy happens to be in Fagin's rooms one night when Monks comes to discuss Oliver with Fagin, and she stealthfully listens to their conversation. What she hears agitates her into action. She manages to visit secretly Rose Maylie, the lady whose name she heard Monks mention. What she tells Rose explains Monks's interest in Oliver. Some time previously, Monks, hoping, for purposes of his own, to find Oliver, had accidentally seen him with Charley Bates and the Dodger. Monks had contacted Fagin, offering to pay him well if he could make a thief of Oliver, though at that time Nancy had not known why. However, during Monks's recent visit, the reason had become apparent. She describes the incident as follows:

I'll tell you, lady. Last night he came again. Again they went upstairs, and I, wrapping myself up so that my shadow should not betray me, again listened at the door. The first words I heard Monks say were these: 'So the only proof of the boy's identity lie at the bottom of the river, and the old hag that received them from the mother is rotting in her coffin.' They laughed and talked of his success in doing this; and Monks, talking on about the boy, and getting very wild, said that though he had got the young devil's money safely now, he'd rather have had it the other way; for, what a game it would have been to have brought down the boast of the father's will, by driving him through every jail in town, and then hauling him up for some capital felony which Fagin could easily manage, after having made a good profit of him besides.⁶²

Rose exclaims in amazement at this information and Nancy continues:

Then, he said, with oaths common enough to my ears, but strange to yours, that if he could gratify his hatred by taking the boy's life without bringing his own neck in danger, he would; but, as he couldn't, he'd be upon the watch to meet him at every turn in life; and if he took advantage of his birth and history,

⁶²Dickens, op. cit., p. 279.

he might harm him yet. 'In short, Fagin,' he says, 'Jew as you are, you never laid such snares as I'll contrive for my young brother Oliver.'⁶³

Nancy also mentions that Monks thinks it an act of fate that Oliver should be with the Maylie family, and that the Maylies would give much money to know the boy's real identity. This is the extent of Nancy's information, however, but the evidence indicates that Lytton and Dickens are utilizing similar plot-motivation and complications.

The parallel between Oliver Twist and Paul Clifford is evident. In both cases, the identity of the hero accidentally becomes known to a close relative. However both of these relatives, Paul's father and Oliver's brother, for selfish reasons do not want the information to become publicly known. To Judge Brandon it is a case of pride and position. He fears the stigma that will arise from acknowledging a son who is a celebrated criminal. To Monks it concerns money and the provisions of their father's will. Both Monks and Brandon put their own interests in the matter first, although they differ greatly as individuals. The strain of pronouncing Paul's doom is more than Brandon can endure, while Monks, on the other hand, is bothered by no sense of guilt in his malicious plotting against Oliver.

Rose, pitying Nancy and realizing that the girl is not thoroughly evil, begs her to repent and not to go back to the thieves. Nancy, however, because of her attachment to Bill Sikes, feels she must get back to him, saying to Rose:

When ladies as young, and good, and beautiful as you are. . . give away your hearts, love will carry you to all lengths--even such as you, who have home, friends, other admirers, everything, to fill them. When such as I, who have no certain roof but the

⁶³Ibid.

coffinlid, and no friend in sickness or death but the hospital nurse, set our rotten hearts on any man, and let him fill the place that has been a blank through all our wretched lives, who can hope to cure us? Pity us, lady--pity us for having one feeling of the woman left, and for having that turned, by a heavy judgment, from a comfort and a pride, into a new means of violence and suffering.⁶⁴

Thus Dickens, like Lytton, once more speaks for the underdog of society. Nancy, an orphan of the slums, has had no chance in life, and society has forced her to become as she is. Yet, even after a lifetime of association with crime, she is not totally depraved. Dickens demonstrates this further by the following statements Nancy makes to Rose as she leaves:

. . . I have felt more grief to think of what I am, tonight, than I ever did before, and it would be something not to die in the hell in which I have lived. God bless you, sweet lady, and send as much happiness on your head as I have brought shame on mine!⁶⁵

It is interesting to note that Dickens's Nancy, at times such as this, is capable of handling the English language in a most proper (and eloquent) fashion. Other examples of such "instinctive" language usage have been pointed out previously in both Paul Clifford and Oliver Twist. It is almost as though Dickens hoped to demonstrate further some lady-like qualities in an otherwise quite unlady-like young woman, thus further showing that she does have some redeeming qualities.

Rose does not know to whom to turn for advice at this point. Fortunately, however, the following day Oliver comes running into the house, telling her that he has seen Mr. Brownlow getting out of a coach and entering a house. Rose quickly decides to take Oliver and call on the gentleman. Thus Oliver is once more reunited with his old

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 282.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

benefactor, much to the happiness of both individuals. Privately, Rose tells Mr. Brownlow the information gained from Nancy. They decide that he will pass it on to Mr. Losberne and she to Mrs. Maylie and then all four will meet together to discuss Oliver. They hope to discover Oliver's parentage and regain for him his inheritance, of which he has evidently been fraudulently deprived. They decide to take Harry Maylie, Mrs. Maylie's son, and Mr. Grimwig, Mr. Brownlow's closest friend, into their confidence.

Meanwhile, Noah Claypole, the charity boy-apprentice of Mr. Sowerberry, and Charlotte, Mrs. Sowerberry's maid, have robbed the Sowerberrys and escaped to London. Here, at a tavern, they happen to meet Fagin, who, recognizing Noah for the scoundrel he is, hires him, as he is in need of a new helper. The Dodger has only recently been caught in the attempt to pick a pocket and is imprisoned, awaiting trial. Noah, being new in London, is prevailed upon to attend the trial and then to report back to Fagin and company.

Thus Oliver Twist also includes a trial scene, though it involves an individual exceedingly different from Paul Clifford. The Dodger enjoys his chance at notoriety. He is both defiant and loquacious. One has the feeling that the Dodger's actions represent the type that the spectators had expected to observe, but did not, during Paul Clifford's trial. The jailer informs the judge that the Dodger has been arrested many times previously and that he knows him well. The Dodger is quick to answer, "Oh! You know me, do you?. ...Very good. That's a case of deformation of character, any way."⁶⁶ This, and other such

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 308.

retorts on the part of the Dodger, keep the courtroom in an uproar of merriment, but the evidence against the Dodger is too positive and the jailer is ordered to take the Dodger away. The Dodger has the last word, though, saying as he is led out:

Oh ah! I'll come on. ...Ah! (To the bench) it's no use your looking frightened; I won't show you no mercy, not a ha-porth of it. You'll pay for this, my fine fellers. I wouldn't be you for something! I wouldn't go free, now, if you was to fall down on your knees and ask me. Here, carry me off to prison! Take me away!⁶⁷

With this, the Dodger evinces strong self satisfaction, and Noah hastens back to tell Fagin that "...the Dodger was doing full justice to his bringing-up, and establishing for himself a glorious reputation."⁶⁸ Thus, in both Oliver Twist and Paul Clifford one experiences a courtroom scene in which a defiant prisoner addresses himself to a judge, though, to be sure, in much different manners. Dickens's trial is almost a parody of Lytton's, as one can easily see.

After this humorous interlude with the Dodger, Dickens returns to Nancy. She has arranged to meet Rose late at night, but is prevented from doing so by Bill. Fagin, thinking that perhaps Nancy has formed an attachment with someone new, decides to have her followed, so as to have an additional hold over her. He employs Noah Claypole for this. When Nancy meets Rose and her friends, Noah overhears the conversation. Nancy describes Monks to Mr. Brownlow, who seemingly recognizes him from the description, which is none too pleasant. One particularly identifying characteristic is a large red mark on his throat. Rose and Mr. Brownlow beg Nancy to let them help her, but she states that she is chained to her way of life and must go back to Bill Sikes.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 309.

⁶⁸Ibid.

Fagin, being informed of the foregoing, plots evil for Nancy. He tells Bill Sikes, who, in his fury, goes to take revenge on the girl. As she fights for her life, Nancy begs Bill to spare her, for his sake as well as hers, as follows:

Bill. . .the gentleman and that dear lady told me tonight of a home in some foreign country where I could end my days in solitude and peace. Let me see them again, and beg them, on my knees, to show the same mercy and goodness to you; and let us both leave this dreadful place, and far apart lead better lives, and forget how we have lived, except in prayers, and never see each other more. It is never too late to repent. They told me so--I feel it now--but we must have time--a little, little time!⁶⁹

Thus Dickens, as well as Lytton, puts forth the idea that it is never too late to repent and change, and one feels that it would be possible for Nancy, at least, to do so. However, Bill is not interested in, nor probably capable of, repentance, and beats her to death. As Nancy dies, she breathes ". . .one prayer for mercy to her Maker."⁷⁰ But Dickens shows Bill as a criminal deserving of no sympathy.

Mr. Brownlow is quick to act on the information provided him by Nancy. Recognizing the description of Monks as fitting an acquaintance of his by the name of Edward Leeford, he has the man brought to him. He then reveals to Monks what he knows of Oliver's past history. Mr. Brownlow had been the best friend of Mr. Leeford, the father of Monks and Oliver. In fact, he had been engaged to marry Mr. Leeford's sister, but she had died shortly before the wedding was to have taken place. Mr. Leeford had been forced, at a very young age, to marry a woman ten years his senior. From this unfortunate union a child, Monks, had been born, the parents separating soon after. Eventually Mr. Leeford, living

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 333.

⁷⁰Ibid.

a quiet and retiring life, made friends with a retired naval officer and his two daughters, aged nineteen and three years. Leeford and the elder daughter fell much in love, and the two became engaged. At this point a wealthy friend died in Italy, leaving a considerable sum of money to Leeford. The latter hastily journeyed to Italy to settle the affairs of the friend, stopping briefly in London to see Mr. Brownlow while enroute. He left with Mr. Brownlow a portrait of a young lady and told him that he intended to convert his property into cash, settle some on Monks and his mother, and then leave England, not alone, permanently. However, Mr. Leeford died in Italy, and Monks and his mother, knowing he was there, had traveled to Italy also, finding and destroying the will he had made. Brownlow now confronts Monks with the evidence gained from Nancy and threatens to implicate him in Nancy's murder if he does not execute the provisions of his father's will and make restitution to Oliver. This Monks finally agrees to do.

From here the scene shifts to Jacob's Island, an extremely sordid section of London where the remnants of the gang of thieves are hiding out. Dickens's description of Jacob's Island is extremely vivid. He says that there is a particularly filthy and strange part of London close to the Thames that many people never enter. To reach this place, one must penetrate a maze of streets that are narrow, close and muddy, thronged by the poorest and roughest waterside inhabitants. The houses are in various stages of decay, and the whole area is one of general filth and squalor. He continues:

In such a neighbourhood, beyond Dickhead in the Borough of Southwark, stands Jacob's Island, surrounded by a muddy ditch, six or eight feet deep and fifteen or twenty wide when the tide is in, once called Mill Pond, but known in the days of this story

as Folly Ditch. It is a creek or inlet from the Thames, and can always be filled at high water by opening the sluices at the Lane Mills from which it took its old name. At such times, a stranger looking from one of the wooden bridges thrown across it at Mill Lane, will see the inhabitants of the houses on either side lowering from their back doors and windows, buckets, pails, domestic utensils of all kinds, in which to haul the water up; and when his eye is turned from these operations to the houses themselves, his utmost astonishment will be excited by the scene before him. Crazy wooden galleries common to the backs of half a dozen houses, with holes from which to look upon the slime beneath; windows, broken and patched, with poles thrust out, on which to dry the linen that is never there; rooms so small, so filthy, so confined, that the air would seem too tainted even for the dirt and squalor which they shelter; wooden chambers thrusting themselves out above the mud, and threatening to fall into it--as some have done; dirt-beameared walls and decaying foundations; every repulsive lineament of poverty, every loathsome indication of filth, rot, and garbage; all these ornament the banks of Folly Ditch.

In Jacob's Island, the warehouses are roofless and empty; the walls are crumbling down; the windows are windows no more; the doors are falling into the streets; the chimneys are blackened, but they yield no smoke. Thirty or forty years ago, before losses and chancery suits came upon it, it was a thriving place; but now it is a desolate island indeed. The houses have no owners; they are broken open, and entered upon by those who have the courage; and there they live, and there they die. They must have powerful motives for a secret residence, or be reduced to a destitute condition indeed, who seek refuge in Jacob's Island.⁷¹

It is in such a ruined house that Sikes seeks refuge. Toby Crackit, Charley Bates and several other robbers are already there. This hunted, frightened group in its sordid surroundings is a far cry from any glorification of crime. Charley Bates, horrified at seeing the murderer, yells for help and attacks Bill. A crowd gathers outside the house and Charley, screaming, directs them into the house. Bill runs to the roof, hoping by means of a rope to lower himself and escape. However, just as he starts to lower the rope over his head, he suddenly fancies he sees Nancy's eyes staring at him. Startled, he

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 350-351.

loses his balance, falling off the roof. The rope tightens around his neck and he thus accidentally hangs himself. Fagin is also taken prisoner, and the gang is finally broken up.

Shortly after this, Oliver is told of his identity. Then Mr. Brownlow forces Monks to disclose to Oliver and his friends the contents of a letter written to Oliver's mother, Agnes, and the will that Mr. Leeford had written before he died, but which had been taken by Monks and his mother in their malice. He explains the letter as follows:

The Letter?--A sheet of paper crossed and crossed again, with a penitent confession, and prayers to God to help her. He had palmed a tale on the girl that some secret mystery--to be explained one day--prevented his marrying her just then; and so she had gone on, trusting patiently to him, until she trusted too far, and lost what none could ever give her back. She was, at that time, within a few months of her confinement. He told her all he had meant to do, to hide her shame, if he had lived, and prayed her, if he died, not to curse his memory or think the consequences of their sin would be visited on her or their young child; for all the guilt was his. He reminded her of the day he had given her the little locket and the ring with her Christian name engraved upon it, and a blank left for that which he hoped one day to have bestowed upon her--prayed her yet to keep it, and wear it next to her heart, as she had done before--and then ran on, wildly, in the same words, over and over again, as if he had gone distracted. I believe he had.⁷²

Mr. Brownlow next insists that Monks disclose to all present the terms of Mr. Leeford's will. However, as Monks remains silent, Mr. Brownlow speaks for him as follows:

The will. . . was in the same spirit as the letter. He talked of the miseries which his wife had brought upon him; of the rebellious disposition, vice, malice, and premature bad passions of you his only son, who had been trained to hate him; and left you, and your mother, each an annuity of eight hundred pounds. The bulk of his property he divided into two equal portions--one for Agnes Fleming, and the other for their child, if it should be born alive,

⁷²Ibid., pp. 362-363.

and ever come of age. If it were a girl, it was to inherit the money unconditionally; but if a boy, only on the stipulation that in his minority he should never have stained his name with any public act of dishonour, meanness, cowardice, or wrong. He did this, he said, to mark his confidence in the mother, and his conviction--only strengthened by approaching death--that the child would share her gentle heart, and noble nature. If he were disappointed in this expectation, then the money was to come to you: for then, and not till then, when both children were equal, would he recognize your prior claim upon his purse, who had none upon his heart, but had, from an infant, repulsed him with coldness and aversion.⁷³

Monk's mother had informed Agnes's father of part of the truth, but had kept secret the letter and the will. Feeling shamed and dishonored, Agnes's father had moved with his children to a remote corner of Wales. Here, one night Agnes disappeared and he, assuming she had destroyed herself in shame and guilt, had died shortly after of a broken heart. Years after, as Monks's mother lay dying, Monks swore to her that if a child had been born to Agnes and should ever cross his path, he would pursue it with animosity with the intent of bringing it to the gallows. Eventually Oliver had come his way, and Fagin had been well paid for keeping Oliver ensnared.

The Bumbles are then summoned and forced to admit their part in the suppression of Oliver's identity. However, the last surprise comes to Rose. Mr. Brownlow reveals her as being Agnes's sister, thus Oliver's aunt. When her father had died, he had left no clue to his real identity. Rose had been taken in by some poor cottagers who reared her as their own. Monks had traced her down at that point, and, seeing her in a wretched condition, had been content to have her remain there. When the cottagers became ill, a widow residing near by saw the girl, pitied

⁷³Ibid., p. 363.

her, and took her home with her. The lady, of course, was Mrs. Maylie. At this point, Harry, Mrs. Maylie's son returns, finds out the history of Rose, and, declaring his love for her, asks her to marry him. Thus the whole family is happy. This extraordinarily complicated plot involving unknown relationships shows Dickens following the invention of Lytton's plots, even adding to them.

Dickens now returns the narrative to Fagin. He has been brought to trial and sentenced to death. When asked by the judge if he wishes to speak concerning his sentence, he has nothing to say. He spends his last hours in fear and dread, finally losing his mind. The scene depicting Fagin in jail is gruesome and dismal--a far cry again from any glorification of crime.

Dickens, like Lytton, ends his book with a discussion of what happens to the people in the story. Rose Fleming and Harry Maylie are soon married, and Mrs. Maylie lives tranquilly with them for the rest of her days. The remaining money of Mr. Leeford's estate is divided equally between Oliver and Monks. Monks, under an assumed name, goes to the New World, squanders his money, resorts to knavery, and dies in prison. Mr. Brownlow adopts Oliver as his son, and they and Mrs. Bedlow, the housekeeper, move to a house close to the parsonage where the Maylies live. Mr. Losberne soon retires and moves to the neighborhood also, with Mr. Grimwig as a frequent visitor.

The fates of the more ignoble characters are also included. Charley Bates is the only surviving member of the gang of thieves who redeems his life.

Master Charles Bates, appalled by Sikes's crime, fell into a train of reflection whether an honest life was not, after all, the best. Arriving at the conclusion that it certainly was, he turned

his back upon the scenes of the past, resolved to amend it in some new sphere of action. He struggled hard, and suffered much, for some time; but, having a contented disposition, and a good purpose, succeeded in the end; and, from being a farmer's drudge, and a carrier's lad, he is now the merriest young grazier in all Northamptonshire.⁷⁴

Noah Claypole, on the other hand, having received a pardon because of his testifying against Fagin, was faced with gaining a new livelihood. He finally decided to become an informer. Charlotte and he dress in respectable attire, and during church time on Sunday she "faints away at the doors of charitable publicans, and the gentleman being accommodated with three-penny worth of brandy to restore her, lays an information next day, and pockets half the penalty."⁷⁵ Thus Noah, the complete scoundrel, remains one. The Bumbles suffer a sad fate. Deprived of their situations, they finally are reduced to a state of pauperism and spend the remaining years of their lives in the workhouse where they had once lorded it over others. Representing the worst aspects of the Poor Law system, the Bumbles receive a type of poetic justice from the vindictive Dickens.

In summation, now that Oliver Twist and Paul Clifford have been compared point by point throughout their respective plots, it would be meaningful to discuss them on a more general basis. That Dickens was greatly influenced by Lytton has become increasingly apparent throughout the foregoing pages. The similarities in plots have been demonstrated--unknown orphan boy finally discovers his parentage and makes good. Many similar dramatic devices used by the authors have been mentioned, including the deathbed scenes of the mothers, the disappearance

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 379.

⁷⁵Ibid.

of clues to the identities of the boys, the attempts by close relatives at suppression of evidence pointing to their identities, the false accusations of pickpocketing charges, the period of association with criminals, the accidental meetings of unknown relatives, and the final dramatic revelations of identities.

One device used (some might say overused) constantly throughout both books is that of coincidence. Both plots depend strongly upon this, and the fates of both heroes are determined by it. It is by coincidence that the boys meet the various individuals who so strongly influence their lives. For example, Paul Clifford just happens to meet Long Ned when he has no other place to go, just happens to become accused of robbing his unknown father, just happens to meet Tomlinson in prison, and just happens, after becoming a notorious highwayman, to meet his cousin Lucy and fall in love with her. *Oliver Twist*, on the other hand, just happens to be noticed and identified by Monks after falling under Fagin's power by chance, just happens to be befriended by his unknown father's closest friend, just happens to be recaptured for Fagin by Nancy, and just happens to be forced to become involved in an attempt to burglarize the home in which his unknown aunt lives, being befriended by her. Dickens probably felt the use of coincidence to be effective in Paul Clifford and used it in his own book, but it is hard to believe that this distortion of coincidence improves either novel.

Previous mention has been made of the language usage in these books. In both Paul Clifford and Oliver Twist the heroes and the redeemable scoundrels tend to use better grammar than the unredeemable

scoundrels. The two exceptions to this are MacGrawler, the educated scoundrel in Paul Clifford, and Charley Bates, the pickpocket in Oliver Twist who finally goes straight. However, both characters present good contrasts to the heroes. The uneducated Paul Clifford has much more integrity than does his old teacher, MacGrawler, whereas little Oliver presents a gentle contrast to the loud, uproarious Charley Bates. Tomlinson, Pepper and Nancy all have redeemable qualities and they show a much better command of the language than do Fagin, Sikes and Noah Claypole.

By comparing Fagin with MacGrawler and the Dodger with Long Ned, one can gain additional interesting insight into Dickens's composition of Oliver Twist. Though on the surface these individuals, particularly Fagin and MacGrawler, seem to be dissimilar, closer examination discloses some common likenesses. Since they are more easily discernable in Long Ned and the Dodger, these two will be examined first. Though they differ in age, Long Ned being considerably older than the Dodger, they have many like qualities. Both are jolly, brash young fellows with a "devil-may-care" attitude. Yet they are quick to help out someone if need be. It should be recalled that it was Ned who befriended Paul and the Dodger who befriended Oliver when the boys were hungry and homeless. On the other hand, it was Ned who was guilty of the theft for which Paul was accused and the Dodger who was guilty of that for which Oliver was accused. Though both are thorough rogues, they are likeable, and neither is truly malicious.

In opposition to this set of characters one sees MacGrawler and Fagin. Both are older individuals in whom the heroes at first place

their trust, only to find that they are completely untrustworthy. Because MacGrawler once tutored Paul, Paul goes to him for help when he runs away from The Mug, only to be cheated by his benefactor. Years later, when MacGrawler is in a desperate plight, Paul and his band befriend him, only to be betrayed to the police by the man. He also is chief witness against Paul at Paul's trial. Thus he is an individual who has no likeable qualities, and who is thoroughly malicious and evil, thinking only of himself.

There is a somewhat similar relationship between Oliver and Fagin. The Dodger brings Oliver to Fagin, who promises him employment. He "tutors" Oliver too, but in the art of pickpocketing. When Monks discovers Oliver and offers to pay Fagin well to ruin the boy, Fagin is more than willing to accept the proposition, and does his best to lead Oliver astray. It is clear that he would not hesitate to sacrifice anyone in order to gain his own ends, and he feels no pangs of conscience when he deliberately incites Bill Sikes to murder Nancy. Indeed, it is he who betrays Nancy to Bill. Thus, after a brief study of MacGrawler, Fagin, Long Ned and the Dodger, it is evident that Dickens adapted not only events, but also characters from Lytton's work for his own book.

In order to demonstrate graphically the similarities found in Paul Clifford and Oliver Twist, a comparative summary of major incidents in these two books has been compiled. This information follows in Table 1.

It is interesting to note that although Oliver Twist was written seven years after Paul Clifford, was based much upon Paul Clifford, and was published at a time when Dickens was relatively unknown and Lytton was famous, Oliver Twist has lasted in popularity and praise, whereas Paul Clifford has not. The question arises as to why this happened.

Table 1. A comparative summary of Paul Clifford
and Oliver Twist

	<u>Paul</u> <u>Clifford</u>	: <u>Oliver</u> : <u>Twist</u>
Hero orphaned in early childhood	x	x
Hero named by a stranger	x	x
Hero becomes charity ward		x
Hero adopted by casual acquaintance	x	
Hero's true identity unknown	x	x
Secret clues to identity hinted at to reader	x	x
Hero shows evidences of inherent gentility	x	x
Hero treated cruelly while young		x
Hero goaded into running away from undesirable environment	x	x
Hero becomes hungry and without shelter	x	x
Hero befriended by criminal	x	x
Hero not interested in becoming a criminal	x	x
Hero innocent bystander while companion picks a pocket	x	x
Hero accused of taking part in pickpocketing	x	x
Actual culprit in offense escapes	x	x
Victim of pickpocketing hero's unknown relative	x	
Victim of pickpocketing hero's unknown friend		x
Hero brought before magistrate	x	x
Hero sentenced to prison	x	
Hero befriended by pickpocket victim		x
Hero again falls under criminal influence	x	
Hero involved in crime	x	x
Hero unknowingly meets relatives	x	x
Hero's resemblance to unknown parent noted	x	x
Hero impresses people by good appearance, speech and manners	x	x
Clues to hero's identity secreted with pawnbroker	x	x
Clues to identity redeemed from pawnbroker	x	x
Clues given to hero's relative	x	x
Relative tries to suppress clues to hero's identity	x	x
Hero establishes affectionate relationship with other relative	x	x
Hero captured by law and sentenced to death for crime	x	
Hero shielded from law		x
Hero's identity revealed at crucial time	x	x
Unknown relative receives just due for suppression of identity	x	x
Hero becomes wealthy and respected	x	x
Hero remains near benefactor	x	x
Fate of hero's criminal acquaintances given	x	x

It is naturally accepted that Dickens is the better of the two writers. Anyone reading works by the two authors can understand this as he becomes bogged down in Lytton's wordiness. But the critics, over the years, have felt that there is more of a difference than just the clarity in style. A later contemporary of Dickens and Lytton, Anthony Trollope, was one of the first individuals to point to the comparative effectiveness of these two men.

Dickens 'in his best days always lived with his characters; . . . he invested his puppets with a charm that has enabled him to dispense with human nature.' Lytton, however, 'never knew his own characters.'⁷⁶

The theory that Dickens really knew and understood his characters, whereas Lytton did not, has been discussed and carried further by Una Birch Pope-Hennessey in her biography of Dickens. She, too, briefly notes a similarity in the aims of Dickens and Lytton in the writing of Oliver Twist and Paul Clifford and then follows with this thought-provoking discussion:

A distinction must at this point be drawn between Dickens and other novelists attacking the fabric of society, a distinction of experience. Neither Bulwer, nor Disraeli, nor Kingsley, nor Mrs. Trollope had in childhood been stinted of food, deprived of education or condemned to work in a factory. None of these had realised in his own person what slavery without hope meant. They wrote from the head because they felt sorry for the underdog. Dickens wrote from instinct and with emotion because he had been the underdog.⁷⁷

In other words, both Dickens and Lytton hoped to strike a blow for certain social improvements through their novels, Oliver Twist and Paul Clifford. However, Dickens was able to take many ideas from Paul Clifford and embody them in a much more successful Oliver Twist because

⁷⁶ Oliver Elton, A Survey of English Literature 1830-1880, Volume 2, p. 279.

⁷⁷ Pope-Hennessey, op. cit., p. 138.

he was in touch with his character. He, like Oliver, had been hungry and seemingly friendless, whereas Lytton had not. He had actually often come into contact with the more unfortunate individuals of society in his daily life, and Lytton had not.

Jack Lindsay sums up the effectiveness of Oliver Twist as follows:

In Oliver Charles had based himself on certain eighteenth-century elements, both in themselves and in their offshoots in contemporary thriller and melodrama; and had used the daydream of his own childhood-at-bay to give a picture, emotionally true, of the exploited children of his own day.⁷⁸

He thus is saying that Dickens was able to adopt material from others, such as Lytton, but make it even more effective by the addition of himself.

Thus far the major emphasis in this study has been placed on the similarities between Oliver Twist and Paul Clifford. Dickens's use of much of Lytton's basic plot is obvious. However, he made one outstanding change which may serve as an explanation of why he so freely made use of Lytton's writing. This outstanding change has been alluded to briefly, but is worthy of further consideration. The difference in the two books is that whereas in Paul Clifford the hero is overcome by his environment and succumbs to vice, Oliver Twist's hero, in opposition to this, remains pure and uncorrupted, despite the vileness and depravity of his surroundings. References have been made to the 1841 Preface to Oliver Twist in which Dickens stated that he wished to show Oliver as "the principle of Good, surviving through every adverse circumstance, and triumphing at last."

⁷⁸Lindsay, op. cit., p. 179.

In order to contrast his principle of Good with its environment as much as possible, Dickens placed Oliver amid wretched and squalid criminals. Sikes and Fagin are no half-way criminals. They are completely evil and vile. Their physical descriptions are ugly, they live under conditions of direst poverty, and, far from being happy-go-lucky, they live in constant fear for their very lives. Treachery among them and their associates is accepted and, indeed, expected. Sikes does not trust Fagin and well he might not--Fagin is anxious for any hold he can obtain over Sikes. Sikes is capable of committing murder, and Fagin is capable of suggesting murder. They are shown at the height of their villainy in the death of Nancy. Fagin purposefully stirs Sikes into the murderous rage wherein the latter kills Nancy.

Let us contrast these two individuals with Lytton's three highwaymen, Paul Clifford, Ned Pepper, and Augustus Tomlinson. These three are typical representatives of the romantic criminal. They are gallant, handsome, happy-go-lucky lads, who live a carefree existence. They are much more like Macheath in Gay's Beggar's Opera than any character Dickens ever created. While Dickens admits that both Gay and Lytton had worthwhile aims when they wrote Beggar's Opera and Paul Clifford, he feels that the bandit-heroes they created are so fascinating that the reader will tend to remember them in their romantic aspects and tend to overlook any moral points which the authors attempted to convey. He wrote:

I ask myself, whether any man will be deterred from turning thief because of [his] Macheath being sentenced to death, and because of the existence of Peachum and Lockit; and remembering the captain's roaring life, great appearance, vast success, and strong advantages, I feel assured that nobody having a bent that

way will see anything in the play but a very flowery and pleasant road, conducting an honourable ambition in course of time, to Tyburn Tree.

In fact, Gay's witty satire on society had a general object, which made him careless of example in this respect, and gave him other, wider, and higher aims. The same may be said of Sir Edward Bulwer's admirable and most powerful novel of Paul Clifford, which cannot be fairly considered as having, or being, intended to have, any bearing on this part of the subject one way or other.⁷⁹

Dickens thus is criticizing the failure of Lytton and Gay to show the criminal in his true light. However, he seems to feel that Lytton was not concerned with this point anyway. Lytton wanted to picture the insufferable state of English criminal law, with an eye toward reform. Lytton was not taking up a completely new theme either. In 1794 William Godwin had published his novel, Caleb Williams, in which he included many derogatory remarks concerning English criminal law, prison administration, etc. . . The following quotation is a typical selection from Godwin:

If I had been apprehended upon the most frivolous reasons upon which any justice of the peace ever thought proper to commit a naked beggar for trial, I must still have waited about two hundred and seventeen days before my innocence could be cleared. So imperfect are the effects of the boasted laws of a country, whose legislators hold their assembly from four to six months in every year! I could never discover with certainty whether this delay were owing to any interference on the part of my prosecutor, or whether it fell out in the regular administration of justice, which is too solemn and dignified to accommodate itself to the rights or benefit of an insignificant individual.⁸⁰

Both Godwin and Lytton pointed to the need for reform by showing what havoc unfair laws could create in the lives of individuals. Thus their heroes succumbed to the evils of their environments. At this point Dickens chose to differ. He first painted an extremely sordid

⁷⁹Dickens, *op. cit.*, pp. xiv-xv.

⁸⁰William Godwin, Caleb Williams, p. 253.

picture of the criminal environment and then showed Oliver as the principle of Good, triumphing over all. Gissing effectively summarized this when he commented:

To show. . . Oliver. . . as a creature of pure instincts, struggling and stumbling towards the light and often sinking in despair, would have satisfied neither [Dickens nor his readers] ; the good character must be good in spite of everything, or the Ruler of the universe seems dishonoured.⁸¹

With the foregoing in mind, it would, as a consequence, seem logical to surmise that Dickens deliberately chose to take the basic elements of the plot of Lytton's Paul Clifford and, in his opinion, improve upon them in his more didactic Oliver Twist. There seems to be no record of Lytton's opinion of the change wrought in his basic plot in its transition into Oliver Twist. However, there is evidence that Dickens called his attention to Oliver Twist at a time previous to its publication in book form, November, 1838. The evidence consists of a fragment of a note written to Lytton by Dickens on November 15, 1838, as follows:

My Dear Sir Lytton - May I beg your acceptance of a copy of Oliver Twist?--As I troubled you with a note the other day relative to this son of misfortune, I am more anxious to introduce him to your notice.⁸²

Dickens must have been especially eager for Lytton to read Oliver Twist, judging from the contents of this note. Perhaps the reason was that he wanted to show Lytton what happened to his "son of misfortune," Oliver, who, though surrounded by an evil environment, remained pure.

⁸¹George Gissing, Charles Dickens. A Critical Study, p. 272.

⁸²Walter Dexter, ed., The Letters of Charles Dickens, Volume 1, pp. 177-178.

APPENDIX: CONCERNING JACK SHEPPARD

Attention should be called to a book being composed during the same time that Dickens was writing Oliver Twist. This book was Jack Sheppard, originally called Thames Darrell, and its author was Dickens's first literary friend, William Harrison Ainsworth. Jack Sheppard had been a real criminal, as had been Dick Turpin, the daring highwayman of Ainsworth's successful earlier novel, Rookwood. Ainsworth's characterization of Jack Sheppard and his doxies, Edgeworth Bess and Poll Maggot, follows history and tradition, but an elaborate and involved plot was added by the author.

Although Jack Sheppard was first issued periodically in Bentley's Miscellany, commencing in January, 1839, and concluding in the issue for February, 1840, Ainsworth had been working on it several years prior to this time. He must have been giving thought to his new novel at approximately the time when Dickens was first working on Oliver Twist, the first installment of which appeared in the February, 1837, issue of Bentley's Miscellany, for in a letter written to a friend during May of that year Ainsworth announced his intentions of writing a book based on Jack Sheppard. He wrote, "I mean to write a sort of Hogarthian novel--describing London, etc., at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century."⁸³

Although Ainsworth originally planned to have the work completed by January of 1838, things progressed slowly and he was not finished with it until December of 1838. It may be recalled that Oliver Twist

⁸³S. M. Ellis, William Harrison Ainsworth and His Friends, Volume 1, p. 328.

was published in book form in November, 1838. Consequently, the periods of time during which the two books were being written were approximately the same, and since Dickens and Ainsworth were good friends during this time, they must have discussed their respective novels with one another. In a letter that Dickens wrote to Ainsworth in January, 1838, inviting Ainsworth to dinner, he concluded with, "So set your mind at rest and be merry with Scroope Darrell."⁸⁴

S. M. Ellis, the biographer of Ainsworth, feels that it was Ainsworth who induced Dickens to enter into the school of criminal romance. He states;

Ainsworth, during his researches for Jack Sheppard probably gave Dickens many tips for Oliver Twist concerning the ways of thieves, and he certainly found 'Boz' the name of 'Sikes' for his burglar--for there was an actual James Sikes, the friend and companion-robber of Jack Sheppard.⁸⁵

However, Ellis does not say how or why Ainsworth induced Dickens to attempt this type of fiction. It is certainly quite apparent that the two authors were not attempting to demonstrate the same point. In Jack Sheppard, the life of the criminal is favorably dramatized and glorified. To be sure Jack does pay with his life for his crimes, but what a glamorous time he has until then! This is quite a contrast to the skulking, furtive life led by Dickens's rogues.

Ainsworth, early in Jack Sheppard, makes it known that Jack is of the criminal type. When he first describes Jack as the thirteen-year-old apprentice he writes:

. . .it must be owned that the boy's mouth showed a strong tendency on his part to coarse indulgence. The eyes, too, though large and bright, and shaded by long lashes, seemed to betoken,

⁸⁴Dexter, op. cit., p. 154.

⁸⁵Ellis, op. cit., p. 332.

as hazel eyes generally do in men, a faithless and uncertain disposition. The cheekbones were prominent; the nose slightly depressed, with rather wide nostrils; the chin narrow, but well formed; the forehead broadened and lofty; and he possessed such an extraordinary flexibility of muscles in this region, that he could elevate his eyebrows at pleasure up to the very verge of his sleek and shining black hair, which being closely cropped, to admit of his occasionally wearing a wig, gave a singular bullet-shape to his head. Taken altogether, his physiognomy resembled one of those vagabond heads which Murillo delighted to paint. . . faces that almost make one in love with roguery, they seem so full of vivacity and enjoyment. There was all the knavery, and more than all the drollery of a Spanish picaroon in the laughing eyes of the English apprentice.⁸⁶

This, too, is in direct opposition to the characterization of Oliver Twist, Jack being a symbol of knavery and Oliver, a symbol of purity and goodness.

In conclusion, then, it would seem that as Dickens and Ainsworth discussed the novels that they were going to write, they decided to take opposite paths of direction in writing, though both may be said to be following the example of Lytton. Ainsworth, remembering the success of his former creation, Ben Turpin, evidently decided to try to repeat this success once more by writing a colorful novel based upon the already popular criminal, Jack Sheppard. That he achieved his purpose in this venture is evident, for the success of his book was considered phenomenal. "His 'little burglar,' as the author related, 'became the lion of the day,' and the huge sale of the book exceeded that of Oliver Twist."⁸⁷ Dickens, the moralist, on the other hand, refused to let his hero become tarnished by evil, and insisted that Oliver, the principle of good, should survive all temptations and evil influences unscathed. In order to do this, then, he turned to a book he had read and admired, Paul

⁸⁶ William Harrison Ainsworth, Jack Sheppard, pp. 54-55.

⁸⁷ Ellis, op. cit., p. 358.

Clifford, and from it he took incidents which he used as an integral part of Oliver Twist, the two-fold moral purpose of which, it may be remembered, was to exhibit the evil working of the Poor Law and to give a faithful portrayal of the life of London thieves. This he did to the best of his abilities. Certainly the example and companionship of Ainsworth helped him in choice of subject and material, even though the two authors emphasized opposite conclusions.

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THE INFLUENCE OF BULWER-LYTTON ON
CHARLES DICKENS'S OLIVER TWIST

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The experiences of Charles Dickens as a child illuminated the pages of his novels and contributed particularly to the atmosphere and purpose of Oliver Twist. One of the bleakest periods in his life came when at the age of twelve, because of a family financial plight, he was forced to leave school and start to work at Warren's Blacking Factory, his family soon after this being sent to debtor's prison. Charles remained on the outside, desolate and alone. Though the time of hardship lasted around only five months, he never forgot his despair and thus developed an understanding and deep sympathy with unfortunate childhood that enabled him to write effectively concerning the plight of such a child as the workhouse orphan, Oliver Twist.

At the age of 21, Dickens became a Parliamentary reporter for the Morning Chronicle and became intensely interested in political and social legislation. When, in 1834, the Poor Law Bill was passed, Dickens was one of the individuals who violently opposed it, for in practice it caused the vagrant, the drunkard and the prostitute to live in the workhouse alongside the aged, the ill, and the foundling children, and he felt that the foundling children suffered particularly under this system.

Meanwhile, Dickens, under the name of "Boz," was also writing a series of sketches that upon publication caused other authors to take note of him. He first became acquainted with Harrison Ainsworth and, through him, with John Forster and Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Lytton was both a politician and a successful writer. In 1830 his Paul Clifford had been published and had become immediately popular. Lytton, being vitally interested in criminal law reform, presented his case for such needed changes through the story of Paul, the bandit-hero.

The young Dickens, along with thousands of other readers, admired Paul Clifford and was wholly sympathetic with what Lytton was trying to do. However, he felt that Lytton romanticized the criminal too much and thus failed to show him in his true ugly light. Consequently, when Dickens started publishing Oliver Twist in 1837, he had a twofold moral purpose, which was to exhibit the evil working of the Poor Law and to give a faithful portrayal of London thieves.

When Oliver Twist and Paul Clifford are compared point by point throughout their respective plots, the similarities not only in incidents but also in certain dramatic devices and characterizations become obvious, and it is evident that Dickens was greatly influenced by Lytton, using much of Paul Clifford's basic plot in Oliver Twist. The general theme of both books is the same--unknown orphan boy finally discovers his parentage and makes good. The difference in the two books is that whereas in Paul Clifford the hero is overcome by his environment and succumbs to vice, Oliver Twist, in contrast to this, remains pure and uncorrupted, despite the vileness and depravity of his surroundings. Keeping in mind Dickens's twofold moral purpose in writing Oliver Twist, it would, as a consequence, seem logical for one to conclude that Dickens deliberately chose to take the basic elements of the plot of Lytton's Paul Clifford and, in his opinion, improve upon them in his own Oliver Twist, in which he first painted an extremely sordid picture of the criminal environment and then showed Oliver as the principle of Good, triumphing over all.